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# **IRELAND**

**YESTERDAY  
AND TODAY**









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JOHN E. REDMOND, M. P.  
Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

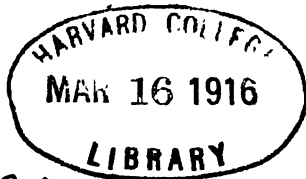
**I R E L A N D  
YESTERDAY  
AND TODAY**

**By HUGH SUTHERLAND**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
JOHN E. REDMOND, M. P.**

**THE NORTH AMERICAN  
PHILADELPHIA  
1909**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Irish people owe much to America—more, perhaps, than to any other nation in existence. The friendship between the two countries has been of long standing. The Irish exiles, driven forth by the exactions of landlordism in the early years of the eighteenth century, powerfully contributed to the victory of Washington and to the establishment of the republic on a basis of strength and security. The idea of the Irish Volunteers, who won Grattan's Parliament, came from America. In the "dark and evil days" of '98, and during the post-Union struggles, down to the time of the Great Famine, Ireland could always command a large and generous sympathy in America. Whilst the British government refused to recognize the extent of the Famine, which was the direct consequence of British misrule, the American government forwarded shiploads of food and clothing for our starving people.

When the Great Clearances swept millions of our race from the homes of their fathers and doomed them to emigration beyond the seas, America gave them a welcome with open arms. The leaders of the Young Ireland movement and of the Fenian movement found hospitality and help in America. And, when Parnell appeared upon the scene, it was America that hailed him as the deliverer of his country and gave the greatest impetus to his success. Since then the sympathy and support of America for Ireland have been never-failing.

When I refer to America in this connection, I do not mean merely Irish-America, from which Ireland naturally expects support, both sentimental and material. I mean America as a whole, the thinking men of all parties in the republic, whose sympathy constitutes one of the greatest assets of the Irish movement for national self-government, because it is morally impossible for England to maintain in

Ireland a system which the judgment of America reprobates and condemns.

This sympathy of America has been made manifest in many ways, but in none more constantly or more effectively than in the public press of the country. Some of the greatest of American newspapers have been steadfast and persistent champions of the Irish cause, and amongst the most widely circulated and most influential of these great molders of public thought and action a high place of honor must be given to *The North American*, of Philadelphia, the reputation of which, as a leading exponent of American ideals, is not confined to the United States, but enjoys a recognition which is world-wide.

Some seven years ago, when the Irish movement was passing through one of its most exciting and critical stages, the proprietors of *The North American* sent one of the ablest members of their staff, Mr. Hugh Sutherland, over to Ireland to describe, for the information of the American people, the Irish situation as he found it. The result was a series of brilliant and illuminating articles, which attracted widespread attention, and which served to concentrate American interest on the nature and the importance of the struggle which was then taking place in Ireland.

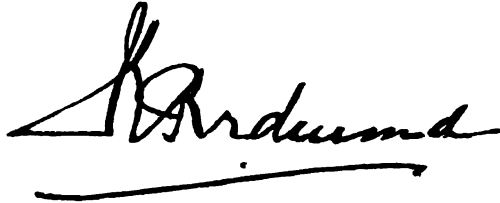
Meantime, the Irish cause has been marching on, and the effects of the concessions wrung by the Irish Party from the British Parliament have begun to make themselves apparent in various directions. In order to describe these effects and to strengthen the appeal of the Irish people to America for a continuance of its sympathy and support during the final stages of the national movement, Mr. Sutherland was this summer again deputed by *The North American* to visit Ireland and to record his impressions of its changed condition as compared with that when he previously visited it, and this he did in a second series of letters no less remarkable than the first.

The publication of these letters in book form and their wide circulation in America cannot fail to be of enormous service to Ireland. Without, of course, binding myself to an absolute acceptance of every opinion expressed in the letters, I have no hesitation in stating that I recognize in

## INTRODUCTION

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them a powerful, eloquent and convincing plea on behalf of Ireland. They exhibit a thorough and comprehensive grasp of the Irish question in all its details, historical, political, moral and material, and for these reasons I heartily commend this volume to the serious consideration of American politicians and thinkers of all parties and of all creeds.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Ardum', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Aughavannagh, Aughrim,  
County Wicklow, Ireland,  
November 12, 1909.

## P R E F A C E

This book is made up from letters written by the Associate Editor of *The North American*, of Philadelphia, and published in that newspaper in 1902 and 1909. During these two years the writer visited Ireland and studied the conditions which have given rise to the complex and interesting problem known as "the Irish Question." The volume records his observations at these two periods.

The first section, "The Problem of the Land," comprises the letters of 1902. The second section, "The Land Problem Solved," comprises letters on the economic conditions found in 1909, and sets forth the wonderful progress made in seven years toward accomplishing the vast and intricate task of replacing landlordism by a system of tenant proprietorship. The third section, also written in 1909, is a discussion of "The Demand for Home Rule."

When *The North American* undertook, seven years ago, the treatment of these matters the Irish Question was little understood by Americans. Generations of agitation, marked often by bitter factional strife, had even dulled public interest in a problem affecting the very life of a sister nation. Moreover, the American press had acquired a habit of ignoring or slighting the Irish struggle for justice. This avoidance was due, first, to a fear of arousing sectarian animosities, and, second, to indifference. *The North American* had no such fear, having confidence in the good sense and fairness of American public opinion when rightly informed, and felt no such indifference toward the fate of a people bound to this nation by strong ties of blood and sympathy.

It is creditable to American newspapers that to-day they discuss the economic problems and the national demands of Ireland far more freely and frankly than ever before. It is creditable to Great Britain that she is dealing courageously and broad-mindedly with the urgent needs of land reform, and that public opinion, even in England, now indorses the century-old demand of Ireland for self-government, no less than five hundred of the six hundred and seventy members of the present House of Commons being advocates of Home Rule.

The purpose of this book is to present an American view of both economic and political conditions in Ireland seven years ago and to-day, partly for the interest such presentation may have for those

of Irish blood and sympathy, but chiefly for the information of the American public and American newspapers. The material has been gathered through personal observation of conditions and personal examination of official reports and records. Beyond this, most of the proofs have been read by government officials, and the facts and figures in regard to the government works may be accepted as accurate. For the comment thereon, of course, the writer alone is responsible.

The historical summaries, particularly those referring to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have been sharply assailed by readers moved by religious feelings; but, as the authors quoted are in most instances of British birth and sympathies, the statements can hardly be challenged as prejudiced in favor of the Irish view. It is impossible to treat adequately, in a few pages, the history of seven hundred years; but the writer is satisfied that what is written is true and necessary to an understanding of the economic and political conditions of to-day.

As to the religious factor, this is discussed somewhat informally, but quite frankly, in the "Postscript" on page 225. It might not be a bad idea to read the postscript before reading the book.

Authorities consulted by the writer included many government records, such as the reports of the Devon Commission (1845); Department of Agriculture; Land Commission; Estates Commissioners; Congested Districts Board; Local Government Board, and Irish Universities Commission, besides the numerous Acts of Parliament dealing with land, laborers, local government and education; the speeches of Gladstone, Bright, Derby, Redmond and other leaders, and the writings of Bryce, John Richard Green, Goldwin Smith, Lecky, etc. Valuable material was gleaned from the following books:

- "The Kingdom of Ireland" (1887), by Charles George Walpole; a history to the time of the Union.
- "Ireland and the Empire" (1901), by T. W. Russell, Unionist M. P.
- "A Hundred Years of Irish History" (1902), by R. Barry O'Brien.
- "The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland" (1904), by Michael Davitt.
- "Ireland and the Home Rule Movement" (1907), by Michael F. J. McDonnell.
- "Contemporary Ireland" (1908), by L. Paul-Dubois; an exhaustive study by a French scholar and historian.
- "The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing" (1909), by Alice Stopford Green (Mrs. John Richard Green); an impressive historical narrative of the destruction of Irish commerce and industries by legislation.
- "Dublin Castle and the Irish People" (1909), by R. Barry O'Brien; a minute and authoritative account of the present system of government in Ireland.

The writer is glad to acknowledge especially the courtesy and



## PREFACE

aid of Mr. Henry Doran, Chief Land Inspector of the Congested Districts Board, whose skill as an administrator and tireless devotion to an arduous office have had much to do with the economic transformation in the most unfortunate parts of Ireland. Acknowledgment is due, also, to John Dillon, M. P., for assistance in gathering facts, and to John E. Redmond, M. P., Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party, for his valued and effective Introduction.

One word more may be permitted in regard to the publication of this book. Its purpose was best explained in a letter from the writer to Michael J. Ryan, Esq., of Philadelphia, President of the United Irish League of America, which was read by him at a mass meeting in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, on November fifth, 1909. The letter was as follows:

"I regret that I find it impossible to accept your invitation to appear at to-night's meeting. . . . I should be very much gratified, however, if you would make an announcement by reading this letter and adding such comments as may occur to you.

"A very strong and flattering demand has been expressed that the letters upon Irish affairs, published in *The North American* in 1902 and 1909, should be put in book form. Though the interest in the articles was wide and their effectiveness in spreading information upon a little understood subject has been generously commended, *The North American* feels that their preservation in permanent form will have more lasting results. This thought has been most cordially indorsed by Irish leaders both here and in Ireland. Mr. Redmond and Mr. O'Connor, among others, have written me urging the publication, and the Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party has thought it worth while to write an introduction for the book.

"As *The North American* has no other purpose than to aid in spreading a general understanding of the Irish problem, it sought these indorsements before attempting the publication. Having received them, it enters cordially into the project. \* \* \*

"In this connection I wish to make it perfectly clear that neither *The North American* nor the writer will take any profit whatsoever from the publication. *The North American* has supported the Irish cause because this newspaper's policy demands the advocacy of every movement looking to liberty and good government. It has gone much further in this direction than any other newspaper, because it is convinced that the project is deserving and that it needs persistent championship in order to win for it that without which it would fail—the public opinion of America.

"For these reasons *The North American* dedicates the forthcoming book to the Irish people, and cordially offers the profits to the

## PREFACE

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advancement of the cause. All who purchase the book, therefore, and induce their friends to purchase it, may have the satisfaction of knowing that the proceeds of each copy sold, above the bare cost of publication, will add to the funds of the Irish Nationalist movement.

"In view of these facts, we invite you and all other officers of the League, and all good Irish men and women, to do what you can toward distributing the volume, and making it, so far as it is worthy, an American textbook of Ireland's progress and Ireland's national aspirations."

In regard to the book, the writer has no other ambition than that this hope shall be realized.

HUGH SUTHERLAND.

Philadelphia, December first, 1909.



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# THE PROBLEM OF THE LAND

## I

### \*THE BEGINNINGS

The Irish people have been fighting for their lives and their homes for seven centuries, and to-day few but themselves know the history, causes or present rights of the dispute. The Irish question to them is a religion, a sacred struggle, in which each succeeding generation makes sacrifices. To the world it is a by-word and a jest. The busy folk in Europe and America run to and fro in the earth, spreading liberty and civilization according to their own views. Here is a race which has been prostrate for a hundred years, a land from which the people are being driven remorselessly by the effects of oppression and misgovernment. Yet the world is indifferent. This heartless acquiescence is not due to intent, but to ignorance. How many Americans, save those of Irish birth, know the meaning of the ceaseless campaign for "free Ireland"? How many believe that it is anything more than a game of politics? How many look with true sympathy upon the indefatigable Irish obstructionists who more than once have stripped the mighty British Parliament of its dignity? If the writer, before coming here, possessed average knowledge in these matters, then the general ignorance is all but fathomless.

\*Chapters I, II, III and IV were written in Dublin in December, 1902.



It becomes necessary, then, to clear away the mass of misapprehension which obscures the Irish problem. An honest effort is to be made in these letters to enlighten the American people in respect to this cause. The investigation will be thorough, and it is being made impartially and conscientiously. In general terms, and briefly, an attempt will be made to establish these propositions, of which the writer has convinced himself:

That the Irish people have suffered as no other people have suffered.

That they have been the victims of injustice, oppression, indifference and legislative blundering for many generations.

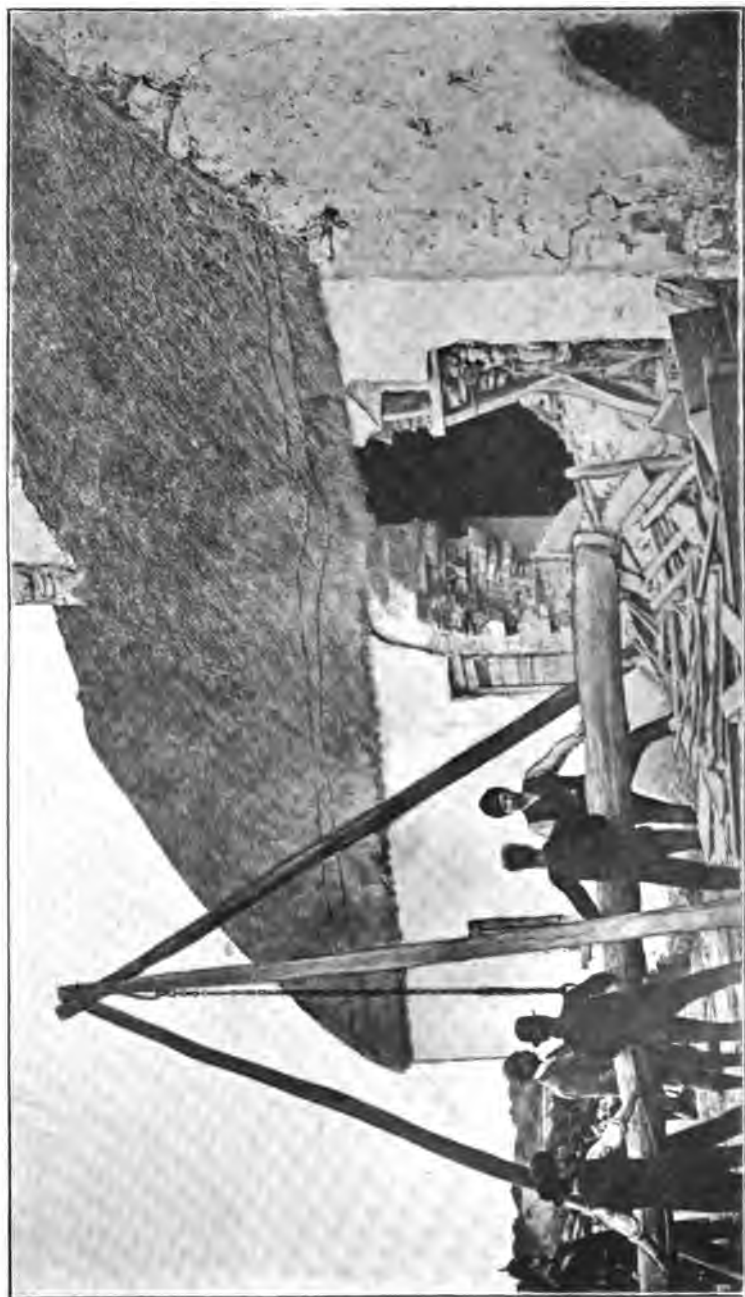
That during the last thirty years they have been granted an increasing measure of justice by wise statesmanship, and will gain more.

And, finally, that the world-wide campaign now swinging on toward victory is not rebellion against lawful authority, but the peaceful evolution of a people toward that liberty which they are the last of the western nations to receive.

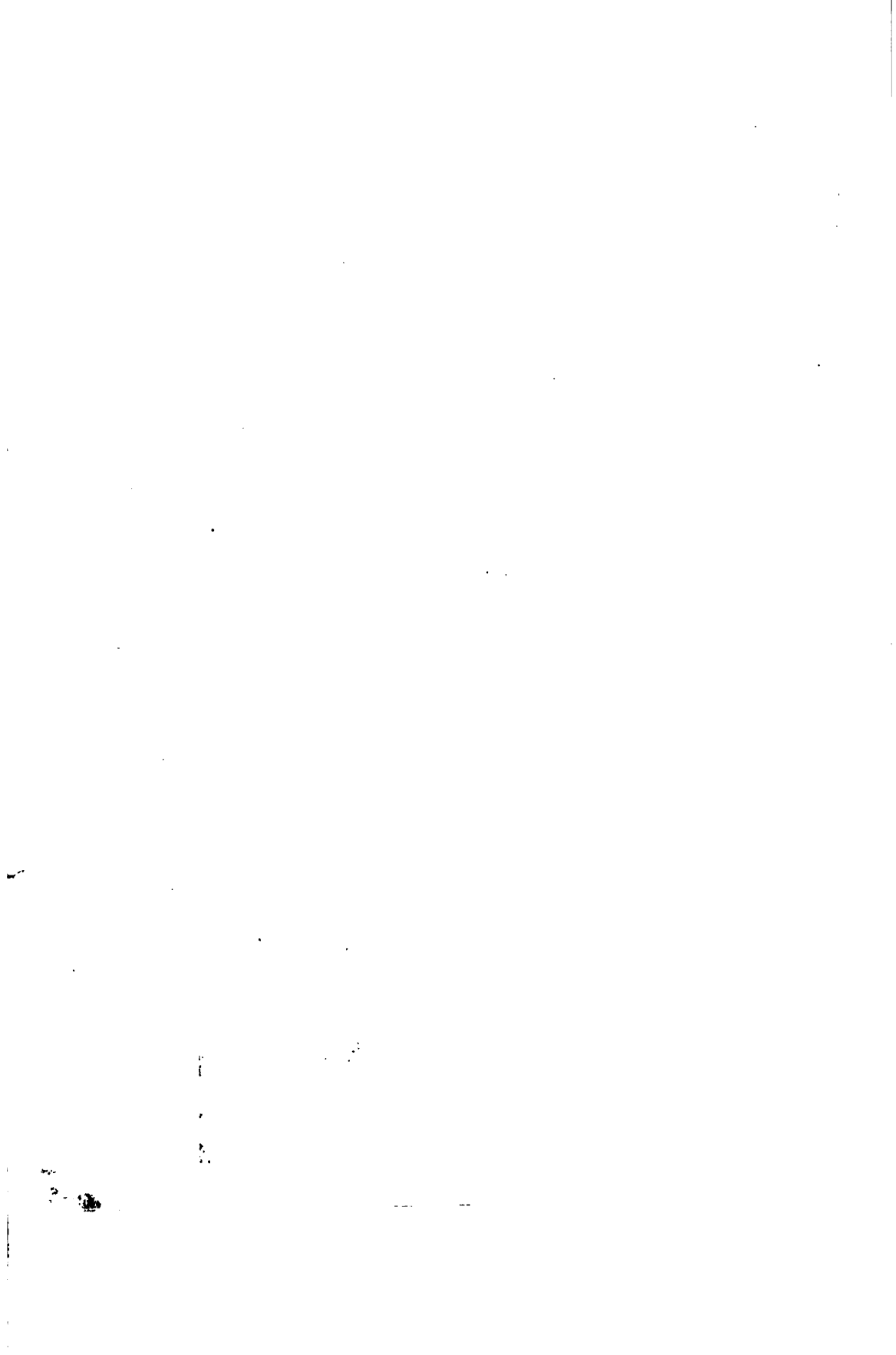
To my mind, only two things are necessary to turn public opinion overwhelmingly in favor of the Irish cause, and public opinion is the reinforcement by which these people will carry the last breastworks of selfishness and prejudice: First, knowledge of Irish history; second, to convince the world that the people are not chronic malcontents, but have a cause based on reason and justice.

Let the appalling story of Ireland be closely read, and the causes underlying this struggle will become clear. And then, as to the ultimate aim, let it be understood that it is not the disruption, but the union, of the British empire; that the intent is not to raise up a state which will threaten the imperial government, but a state which will become the strongest buttress of the best of England's power.

There are those in America, I know, who believe that Ireland is fighting for absolute independence. Black memories and blackened traditions have made them relentless enemies of England and dreamers of Ireland as a separate state, responsible to no authority save her own. But these



HOW THE BATTERING RAM WAS USED IN EVICTIONS.



revolutionists will find no worthy allies in the land of their hopes.

Hatred of England has smoldered here for centuries, and now and again the hot flames of rebellion have flared up. Hatred of England is well nigh universal to-day. Sullen, bitter enmity is the attitude of men and women to the farthest limits of the island, and even the children are born and bred to hate. But these things are the inevitable fruit of the weary years of oppression and the long indifference which followed. Let Ireland win simple justice, and this people will become the stanchest and most faithful partners in the empire. On this point I quote T. W. Russell, M. P., who has fought for forty years in the ranks of Irishmen against the evils of the land system, while steadily opposing Home Rule:

"For seventy years of the last century Ireland was governed wholly in the interests of a class. The people never had one moment's consideration. The famine of 1847, one of those mysterious dispensations by which Providence asserts great principles, was ruthlessly used in the same interests. But Nemesis, long on the road, has at last arrived. The people are now supreme. The whole Irish question was settled when the vote was conferred, in the expressive language of the peasantry, on every 'smoke'—that is, upon every cabin from which the smoke of the turf fire ascends. This is the great fact of the age. The two races (Protestant and Catholic) are joining hand in hand even now for common objects. In due time each will learn that much can be conceded with little or no real sacrifice. And when this lesson has been truly learned Ireland will have real freedom, England will be released from the grip of a nightmare and the empire will be really united."

True, it will take some time to win back the affection of the people, but not so long as it took to inspire them with hatred. The depth of that hatred has been dangerously illustrated during the last three years. Irishmen in Parliament and at home openly espoused the cause of the Boers against their own government. Technically they were guilty of treason. Actually they were expressing the sentiments

of a race utterly alien to those who ruled them. Said one of the national leaders to me the other day:

"You do not realize the deep-rooted enmity of our people toward England. They are rebels, lacking only arms. At those periods when the oppression has been most heavy any foreign power might have found an ally here. If the Emperor of China or the Sultan of Turkey had landed a force in Ireland, the people would have flocked to his standards against England."

These are terrible words, but from what I have seen and heard, I believe they are true. A nation in unarmed rebellion—that is Ireland to-day. And yet this also is true: When the people shall have come again to their own, when the burden of injustice has been lifted from their shoulders and they rise up to greet the dawn of liberty, it will need only patience and care to win back the lost allegiance. This statement was made by the same man who uttered the words just quoted.

The Irish question has such infinite ramifications that this brief introduction is necessary before taking up the detail. The problem was propounded centuries ago, and for the last hundred years has engrossed the attention of the British nation, with and without its consent. Libraries have been written upon it. The greatest statesmen of Europe have given years to its study. It has been the cause of endless discussion, of rebellion, imprisonment, assassination, murder, sacrifice. In the face of such a record it seems hopeless to treat it, in a manner worthy of any attention, after a few weeks of investigation and research. Yet an honest effort can do much, at least, to dispel ignorance upon the most vital points.

I think I can best make myself clear by stating the most obtrusive conditions which now prevail in Ireland. These are, briefly:

Political—Widespread hatred and distrust of England. Peace insured by an armed garrison. A police force, paid by the Irish people, but controlled absolutely from London, scattered over the whole island, with judicial as well as administrative powers. "Coercion" enforced in twenty-one of the

thirty-two counties, whereby free speech is suppressed, trial by jury suspended and public discussion, if displeasing to officials, results in arbitrary imprisonment. In the British Parliament, the balance of power held by the Irish members, who are united in a determination to obstruct the government at every turn. In Ireland, the United Irish League, spreading its organization everywhere, its platform embracing the abolition of landlordism through compulsory sale of lands, and ultimately the establishment of national self-government.

Economic—The nation is dying by inches. Every year the population grows less. In 1800 it was 4,000,000, in 1847 nearly 9,000,000. Now it is 4,456,000. Emigration is ceaseless. The young and vigorous of the race are fleeing from the island as though there were a blight. In the last fifty years 3,850,000 have fled from the land of their birth. Nowhere, save in a few restricted manufacturing districts, is there a condition worthy to be called prosperity. Agriculture is the employment of eight-tenths of the population, and agriculture spells destitution. Hundreds of thousands exist only through contributions from relatives in America and England. In thousands upon thousands of families the men and boys must spend six months of the year in England in order to earn enough money to carry the families through the winter. In a word, the Irish in Ireland are kept alive by the Irish who have been driven to other lands.

Do not these conditions form a problem that shocks the mind? Here is a country two-thirds the size of Pennsylvania, one great farm which seemingly needs but the touch of the husbandman to smile back in bounteous harvest. The Green Isle! Ah, how green it is! December is almost here, yet the fields look as fresh as ours in springtime, and I saw violets and primroses growing the other day when the sun set at four o'clock in the afternoon and winter darkness followed swiftly. Here lies the land, uncounted acres of it, waiting for the farmer, ready to yield its riches to a nation of millions, yet the people flee from it. From year to year

the population shrinks. Instead of plenty there is poverty. Instead of rich farms, comfortable homes, a happy populace, the fields lie bare to the roaming of cattle.

I have traveled from end to end of the country and back again, from sea to sea, visiting the cities, the towns, the villages, the tiny hamlets and farms. And there is one picture which blots out all else. It is desolation. Where the land is cruel and hard there the people are found fighting with supreme courage and desperation against hunger. Where the land is rich and radiant with promise of plenty there is utter loneliness. The people are gone.

What is the meaning of this outrage against nature and humanity? By every law we know of governing human activity and the life of men this country should be populous and prosperous. Of all the countries where white men live, it is the only one where the number of souls grows less and less year by year. Fashioned from the beginning to be the home of many millions, beloved by its sons as no other land under heaven was ever beloved, it is reverting steadily to a place fit only for flocks and herds. Happily, the exodus is being somewhat checked, and there is growing promise that some day the level will begin to rise again. But in that the evil work of centuries has sapped Ireland's best blood, there lies against civilization a heavy debt.

Wherein is the explanation of the steady depopulation of Ireland—of these conditions of unrest, hatred, poverty and hunger? It is named in two words—THE LAND.

In all the endless story of oppression and wrong, this is the beginning and the end. By persecution, by war, by straightforward robbery, by famine and by unjust laws the people have been forced from their lands. Hundreds of thousands have perished miserably, millions have been driven into exile, hundreds of thousands are to-day living chiefly on the bounty of those who have been fortunate enough to escape. In all that shall be written, therefore, let the reader keep in mind the land. That is at the bottom of all trouble, and through it comes salvation presently. The wrangle of politics, the clash of creeds, the defiance of desperate people and the strong measures of insulted law and order—all have their rise in the dispute about the land.

How can it be made clear that in the dispute the complaint of the people is just? I have heard men who have intelligent views on affairs of their own country declare that the trouble in Ireland exists because the people are chronically discontented, have an inborn prejudice against paying rent and murder their landlords rather than meet their just debts. As far back as the oldest living man can remember there has been the same dispute between landlord and tenant. It has become wearisome to those not interested. They have forgotten, or have never taken the trouble to learn, the foundations of the trouble. The placid householder in an American town, for instance, who religiously sends a check to his landlord on the first of the month, and never has a more serious dispute with him than might concern a leaky roof or a patch of soiled wall paper—how can such a man look with sympathy upon a people who form secret societies against landlords and send men to Parliament pledged to the same unholy cause? There must be a readjustment of ideas before we can approach this question intelligently. The slate must be wiped clean for the reception of new facts and new ideas. The Irish land problem has not its parallel anywhere. The conditions are as unique as they are heart-breaking.

Since the land question, therefore, holds the solution of all Ireland's troubles, it will be treated at length in these letters. But first we must lay the foundation for our case, and this foundation must be historical. The beginning of the struggle was in 1169, when Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, the first Saxon invader of Ireland, descended on the coast of Wexford and subdued some of the Irish tribes, establishing the feudal system. Since then there has been a never-ending struggle of the people against those who ruled them. It is needless to recount here the long history of the early period. Indeed, there is not space for it. But the English policy was always the same—to seize the land, reduce the free people to the status of farming serfs and quell their efforts to regain their freedom by the most stringent laws and exactions.

Ingenious means were devised to crush the Irish spirit, and finally to exterminate the race. Under the early Henrys,



laws were passed forbidding the English invaders to marry Irish persons. By these laws the natural enmity between the races was fostered. There was no desire to permit an amalgamation and peaceful division of the land. Hence endless wars raged. For nearly four hundred years Ireland was racked with strife, until at last, under Queen Elizabeth, the subjugation of the islanders was completed for the time being. By that time great tracts of land, which had been in possession of the Irish, had passed to the descendants of the invaders. Industry—which was agriculture, of course—had been utterly prostrated. No man cared to till the ground, for, under the laws, the soldiery had the right to seize whatever crops or property they needed or desired. As a sample of campaign methods, the report of one Malby in 1576 will be of interest. He wrote:

“I marched into the territory of Shan Burke, with determination to consume them with fire and sword. I burned all their corn and houses and committed to the sword all that could be found.

“Then I burned Ulick Burke’s country. In like manner I assaulted a castle, where the garrison surrendered. I put them to the misericordia of my soldiers. They were all slain. Thence I went on, sparing none which came in my way, which cruelty did so amaze their followers that they could not tell where to bestow themselves. Shan Burke made means to me to pardon him and forbear killing of his people. I would not hearken, but went on my way. \* \* \* It was all done in rain and frost and storm, journeys in such weather bringing them the sooner to submission. They are humble enough now, and will yield to any terms we like to offer them.”

Through these expeditions the English learned of the value of the colony, and determined to develop it. Inducements were offered to sons of good families to undertake the colonization of large tracts, one condition being imposed, namely, that no Irish were to be permitted to settle on the grants. The land was parceled out to court favorites in tracts of 1000 to 20,000 acres and more. Thus the people were first driven from their homes. How they suffered one paragraph from a contemporary account will show:

"No spectacle was more frequent in the ditches of the towns, and especially in wasted countries, than to see multitudes of the poor Irish lying dead, with their mouths all colored green from eating nettles, dock and such weeds as they could find on the ground."

When the son of Catholic Mary Queen of Scots came to the throne the suffering people hoped for relief. The answer to their hopes was the confiscation of six counties in Ulster, 3,750,000 acres. The Stuarts continued this policy to the limit, granting the richest tracts to favorites of the court, driving the poor people from their holdings and forbidding the employment upon the grants of any native of Ireland. From these kingly robberies the land titles of most of the great landlords of to-day are derived. Sometimes there was a form of law in the methods of confiscation. Juries were appointed "to inquire into defective titles." It is only necessary to add that a juror who found a verdict against the Crown was imprisoned, pilloried or branded with a hot iron. Under this system 430,000 acres in Wexford, Wicklow and Leitrim were seized by the government and farmed out to those in favor at the court.

In spite of this oppression and robbery, the Irish, inspired by religion and kingly promises, espoused the cause of Charles I. They had their reward, for when the King had been put to death Cromwell and his Roundheads descended on Ireland like a scourge.

That chapter in history cannot be read without a shudder. Massacre followed massacre, and at the end the whole country was declared forfeit to the government. Those Irish who had managed to cling to fruitful lands were driven in the dead of the winter across the Shannon to the westward and forced to make their homes on the most barren lands. Nearly 16,000,000 acres were thus seized and divided among English noblemen and others who had aided the Parliament. Under James II and William of Orange the depredations went on, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Irish people, to whom had belonged the whole of the island, found themselves confined to an area of one-seventh of it, and this the most unproductive land.

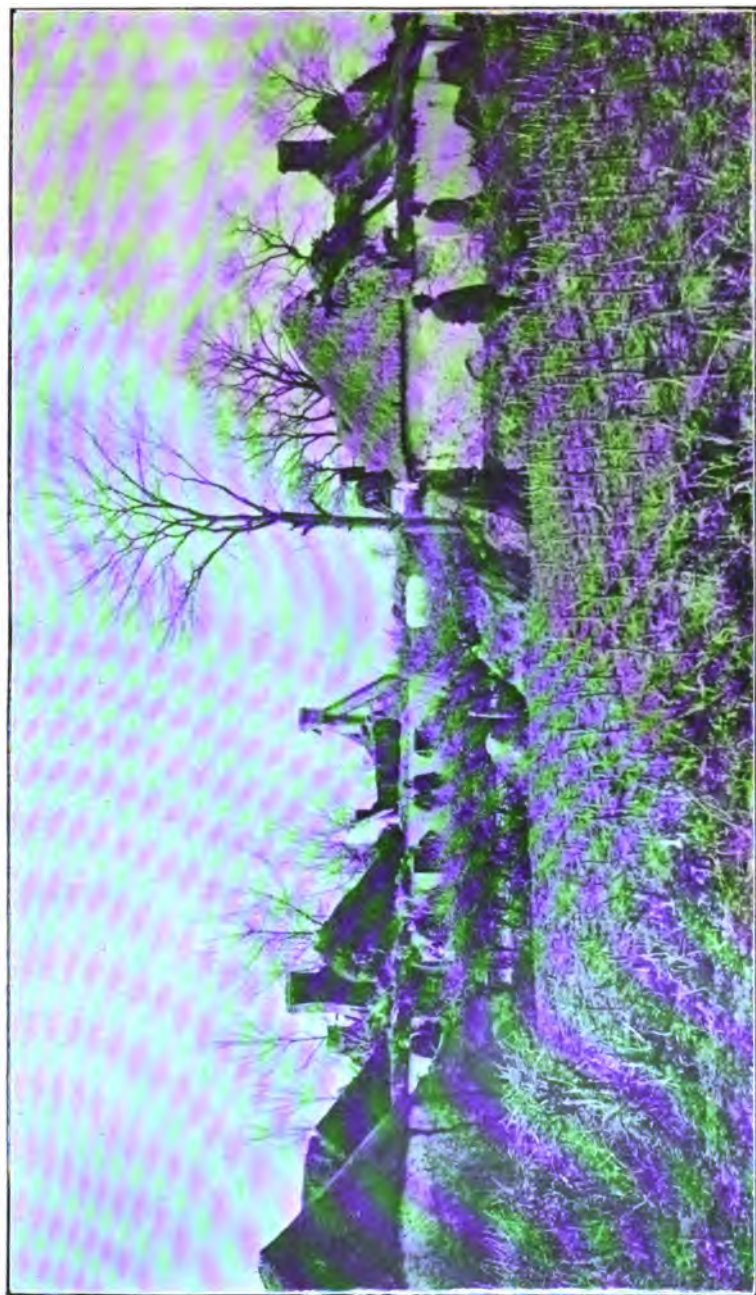
This is just a glance at the record of persecution and

confiscation in Ireland, but it will indicate the historical basis of the Irish claims. The people have been defeated more than once, but they have never yielded except to brute force. Hatreds were engendered in those old days that burn as fiercely to-day. Every Irish child is taught by fireside story the tale of his forefathers' sufferings. Every lad grows up with the teaching that but for tyranny his people would be in possession of fair lands. Necessarily our account has been of the briefest description, and is here given merely to indicate how the land originally passed from the people to the great families of England and their descendants. This, however, makes possible an intelligent survey of the last hundred years, during which the Irish question has been the predominant factor in British politics.

It has outlasted monarchs and their courts. Men have died, but it lives. The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, but it changes not. Through peace and war, famine and plenty, England is always confronted with Ireland and her question: "Will ye let my people go?"

As the consideration of recent history must be postponed, this thought should be stated here, lest any misunderstand. The Irish people do not ask that the crimes of the Tudors, the Stuarts and their successors be undone. They do not demand that the land stolen from their forefathers be given back to them. They only ask the opportunity to buy it. Still battling with hunger and death on the stony patches to which they were driven, they look with unutterable longing upon the fair land that surrounds them, and beg that they may be permitted to redeem it for their children. For a hundred years they have encamped in misery on the other side of Jordan, never faltering in the hope that some day they may cross over.

On one side a starving people, on the other a land of plenty, desolate for need of people—that is the Irish question.



**BURNED OUT: RUINS OF HOUSES AFTER EVICTIONS.**



## II

### THE MAKING OF THE PROBLEM

The unhappy condition of the people in some of the agricultural districts of Ireland has been described so often during past years that it would seem nothing more could be said. Yet to a stranger, an American, ignorant of the facts, the first view is a shock. I have now traversed the country more than once, visiting not only the towns and villages, but the settlements remote from the railroads, and the scenes I have witnessed are so vivid, so pitiful, that the pen aches to set them down. But this task must wait a little. It is easy to find misery anywhere. In our own cities destitution is unhappily familiar, and even in our generous country districts there may be discovered unwholesome conditions of life. This investigation is of small value unless it is shown first that the poverty and suffering are due to misgovernment and that the intolerable conditions can be relieved only by sweeping away the system of Irish landlordism.

Those who properly revere the sacred rights of property need not take alarm at the proposition. It is the sober judgment of the best leaders of thought on the question, and will soon be embodied in the proposals of the British government. They must remember also that the United States does not know any such system of land holding as exists here. It is as foreign to their knowledge as the land laws of China. It is necessary, therefore, to withhold description of actual conditions here until these bases of judgment are established. My first letter sketched briefly the early history of Ireland and showed in outline how the seizures and confiscations, in war and peace, through forms of law and open persecution, resulted in transferring the land by wholesale from the native owners to English adventurers and court favorites. Thus, through the remorseless operation of conquest and greed, the Irish people became a nation of tenant farmers.

In tracing the history of the land question I have talked with many men, among them those who have devoted their lives to the Irish cause. Most of all I am indebted to Mr. T. W. Russell, of Dublin, a member of Parliament. Mr. Russell is a Scotchman, has been in public life for nearly forty years and to-day is one of the greatest figures in the Irish struggle. He has been and is the friend and adviser of the people and of the statesmen as well. There is not a voice in England or Ireland which dare accuse him of wavering a hair's breadth from honesty and sincerity of purpose. He is a student, a thinker and a historian. He has made a lifelong fight for Union as against Home Rule. Furthermore—and this is a greater evidence of impartiality than Americans imagine—he is a stanch Protestant. Upon all counts, therefore, he is a faithful and competent witness for the Irish people. In the succeeding review of the story of the land I take much of my evidence from his "Ireland and the Empire," published within a year, the knowledge so gained being fortified by personal interviews with leaders and by study of the highest authorities.

The political history of the last century will be treated in detail at another time, but these few facts should be borne in mind: Ireland had her own Parliament from 1782 to 1800, and all historians agree that under that rule she enjoyed remarkable prosperity. In 1800, despite the pleas of the people, the Parliament was abolished and a union with England was forced by that country. Of the nature of this act it is only necessary to quote Gladstone, whose judgment few Americans will doubt. He said:

"I know of no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man than the making of the Union between England and Ireland."

For one hundred years, therefore, Ireland has been governed absolutely by England. Mr. Russell's estimate is a terrible indictment:

"Seventy of these years stand out a reproach and a disgrace to England. Nothing can well be worse than the record of the English in Ireland during this period. These years have witnessed several attempts at armed rebellion, suppressed, of course, by the superior power of England. They have seen the people, visited by a great famine, rushing from the country as if it were

plague stricken—3,841,419 having gone across the ocean in fifty years. In other words, forty-seven per cent. of the population have fled from the country to seek bread under another flag.

"These years have witnessed the reign of secret societies, of agrarian crime and of endless coercion acts. They have been dominated by a land system, which can only be described as systematized and legal robbery of the poor. The governed were, in the main, helots and slaves; the governors were, to a large extent, callous and heartless tyrants. England had, unasked and unbidden, taken over the government of Ireland. Where the duty was not shamefully neglected, it was exercised in the interests of a class alone. Until Mr. Gladstone arose, no subject people had ever been more basely treated or neglected by a conqueror."

In view of such a record, when even the elementary liberties of the people were crushed by tyranny, it may be imagined that they suffered grievously in their centuries-old struggle for the land. That this has been and is the supreme issue one statement will show. The population of Ireland is a little over 4,450,000. Of these, nearly 3,500,000 depend directly or indirectly upon the land for their support, for their daily bread. In America a bad season seldom means more than temporary retrenchment to the agricultural element. Here a single failure of crops means absolute destitution to millions. Trade is instantly prostrated, and starvation becomes an imminent peril to hundreds of thousands. Hence it is that upon land reform hang the life and death of the Irish people.

Now to indicate very briefly the developments which have imposed the present cruel and absurd system of land tenure.

In the earliest days the tribal system was in force, that is, the tillers of the soil paid certain tribute to their chieftains. There was, in fact, dual ownership of the land, between the governors and the governed. The struggles which have endured for so many generations have been due primarily to the repudiation of the people's rights as land owners and the gradual seizure of the land by the governing class. Feudal tenure, an anachronism long swept away in other countries, still exists here, and the destruction of it is the only means of restoring peace. The most concise story of how the land was taken from the people is found in the report of the English Devon Commission, headed by the Earl of Devon, which was issued in 1845 after an investiga-



tion covering two years. This report, which is a standard authority, says:

"In the civil contentions which at various periods, and during many centuries, disturbed the repose of England and Scotland, property gradually passed from the feudal tenure of former times to the more civilized relation of landlord and tenant, as known to our present law. It is for us briefly to show how different has been the case with Ireland. Without entering at any length into the history of the past, we cannot avoid noticing a few prominent matters which exercise a material influence in producing the existing relation of landlord and tenant.

"We allude to the confiscations and colonizations of Elizabeth and James, the wars of Cromwell and, lastly, the penal code. The first of these led, in many instances, to the possession of large tracts by individuals whose more extensive estates in England made them regardless and neglectful of their properties in Ireland. Again, the confiscation of the lands of O'Neill, in the North, and Desmond, in the South, was followed by the plantations of Ulster and Munster.

"The extensive settlement of Scotch and English in the counties of Ulster has introduced habits and customs which give a different character to that province from other parts of the island. In Munster the colonization was more imperfectly carried out, and a class of (foreign) undertakers became the landlords of the native peasantry.

"The adventurers who obtained debentures from Cromwell formed, for the most part, a small proprietary; and being generally resident, exercised an influence on the relations of society different from that produced by the large and absent grantees of former reigns.

"These confiscations were followed at a later date by the enactment of the penal laws (against Roman Catholics), which, affecting as they did the position of Roman Catholics as regarded landed property, had a very general influence on society.

"These laws, both in their enactment and in their subsequent relaxations, have materially affected the position of occupier and proprietor. They interfered with almost every method of dealing with landed property by those who profess that religion, and by creating a feeling of insecurity, directly checked their industry. The Protestant landlords, in letting their estates, were thus confined in the selection of their tenants to those who alone could enjoy any permanent tenure under them, and were exclusively entitled to the elective franchise.

"Many of the landlords, therefore, parted with the whole or a great portion of their property for long terms, and thus avoided all immediate contact with the inferior occupiers, so that all the duties of a landlord were left for performance to a middleman.

"This (letting to middlemen) was generally done so as to insure a large profit, and the poor occupiers were frequently exposed to great oppression. The system has entailed upon the country the most injurious consequences."

The facts here given are so important to an understanding of the question that I shall attempt to restate them in simpler terms:

1. The land was taken from the people by force and conferred upon adventurers and titled favorites of the sovereigns. The means used were confiscation, colonization, seizure in time of war and as reprisal by the victors, and, finally, penal laws, which stripped Roman Catholics of nearly every right enjoyed by citizens under free government.

2. In Ulster conditions are different from those prevailing elsewhere, because the new settlers, being English and Scotch, were favored by the granting of certain rights, and these endure to this day, whereas it was not until 1870 that the same rights were conferred on the rest of the country.

3. The very severity of the laws so hampered the owners living in England that they sublet their Irish estates to middlemen, who ground down the hapless peasantry at will. In this regard there is on record an astounding case. In an appeal made under the modern land laws it was shown that between one tiller of the soil and the owner of it there were no fewer than three middlemen. In other words, the farmer upon whom fell all the work had to produce rent for four different purses from his single holding. The court reduced the rent sixty per cent.

### III

#### WHAT IRISH LANDLORDISM IS

In considering the broad question of land tenure in Ireland the vital thing to remember is this: Irish landlordism is totally different from English or American landlordism. In England, for instance, the proprietor of agricultural land owns the land and everything upon it. He builds the houses, the barns, the fences. He pays for the clearing and draining and repairs the roads. The tenant receives from him an equipped farm, and supplies only the labor of tilling, paying a rental based upon the land and improvements.

In Ireland, on the contrary, the landlord supplied nothing but the land, which he or his ancestors received as a gift from the Crown. The tenant, under this system, pays exorbitant rent for the bare ground. It is the tenant who must clear the land, drain it, make roads, build house and barn and fences. In fact, his industry alone creates from the bare soil the farm for which he pays rent.

And here is the almost incredible fact: Until thirty years ago all the labor of the tenant, though he spent a lifetime in making his farm, gave him absolutely no interest in the property. The fences he erected, the roads he made, the buildings he put up—all were the property of the landlord. That was the law. And at any time, with or without cause, rent paid or rent unpaid, that tenant could be evicted from his home at the whim of the landlord, and the work of his lifetime passed automatically into the ownership of the landlord.

Can the mind conceive of a system more monstrous, more absurd? Does it not more than justify Mr. Russell's estimate, when he calls it "systematized and legal robbery of the poor"? Does it not offer at least some palliation for the weary years of violence and assault, by which the oppressed people expressed their despair and misery?

The history of Ireland is smeared with crime. In the

old days there were the cruel methods of the invading troops and authorities; in more recent times the bloody reprisals of the mob. Uncounted brutalities and murders have been charged against the secret organizations of the tenants during the last century. But in reading these horrible stories two facts must be kept constantly in view, if a just opinion is to be rendered: First, the land was taken from the people by violence and by the contemptible processes of religious persecution; second, when they were allowed to reclaim it, on the most exorbitant terms, all their labor was seized for the benefit of the landlords. This cannot be too strongly emphasized, for it is the very foundation of the struggle which has drenched the land in blood and made the Irish people a nation of rebels. Lord Russell, of Killowen, during his life was well known to Americans, who will accept any judgment delivered by him concerning rights under English law. I quote from him:

"The claim of tenant right (part proprietorship in the land by the occupying farmer) is based upon this essential fact: Whereas in England a farm is let, equipped for use as a farm, and the covenant requires the landlord to keep up the farm buildings, houses, fencing and drainage, all this in Ireland is the work of the tenant."

And yet, until Gladstone came to the rescue, in 1870, the lifework of the tenant counted nothing against the landlord-made law. The landlord let the bare soil, perhaps a strip of bog or a patch on a stony hillside; for it must be remembered that land-hunger has been the curse of Ireland, and the people have always been compelled to beg for enough soil to give them a living. The tenant, then, took the bog or the patch of stones and erected his little cabin on it. Before he could raise a peck of potatoes he had to prepare the land. He had to clear out the stones, dig elaborate drains, build fences. It has been truly said that his first three crops were stones. In other words—it will seem incredible to the American farmer—the Irish peasant had to take the raw materials and actually make his farm with his own hands and with the most heart-breaking labor, meanwhile and always paying rent for a farm.

"But," says the hard-working American, "what pioneer

settler does not have to reclaim his land? Do you suggest that all this work should have been done for the farmer without cost to him?"

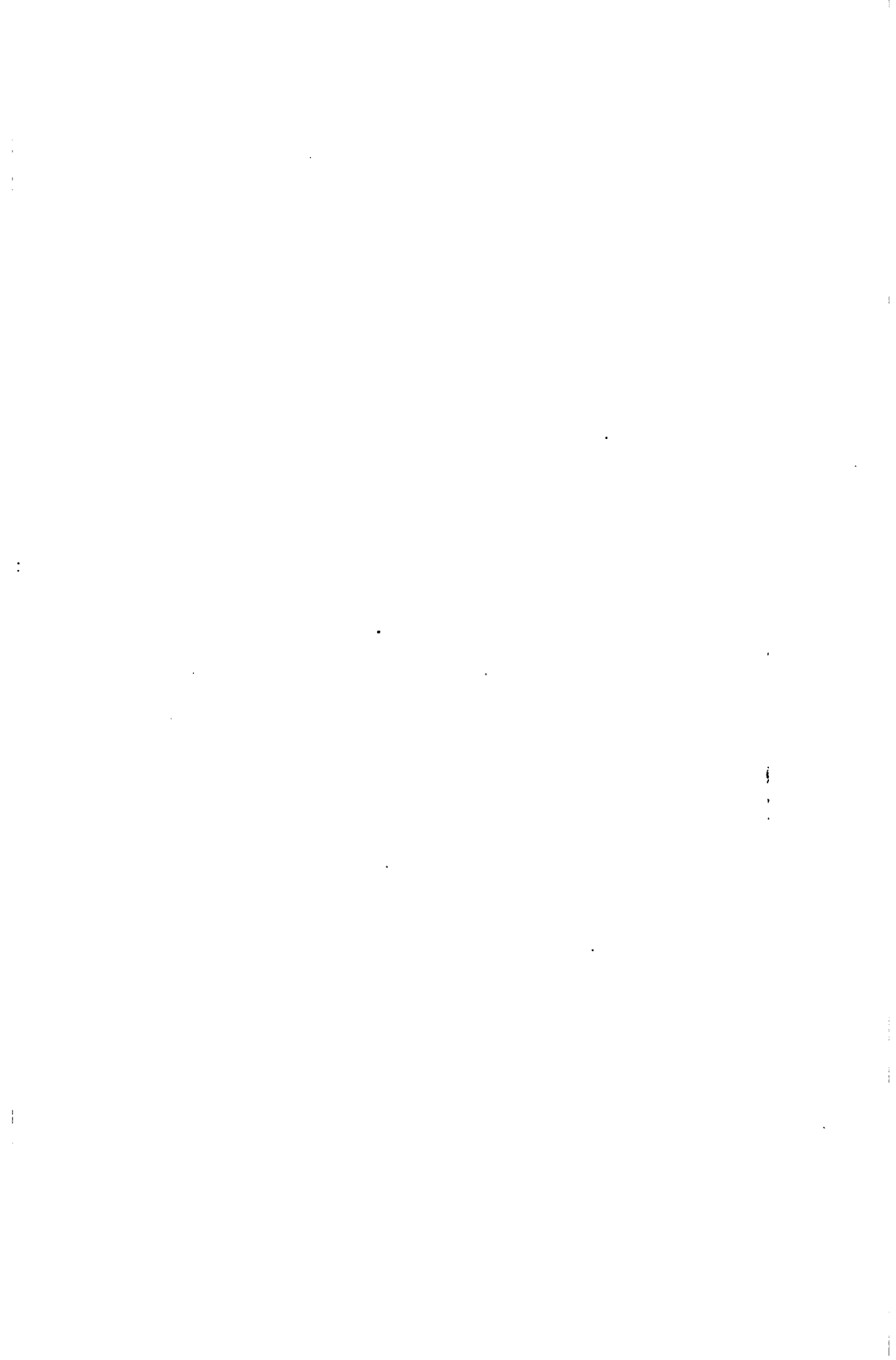
Wait a moment. Let us see what happened. The tenant had given, say, three years to the making of his farm. With infinite labor and by incredible self-sacrifice he drained the bog, dug out the stones with his hands and carted them away, and at last had made ready a patch of ground to grow food for himself and his family. At such time arrived the landlord's agent. With practiced eye he surveyed the improved land, estimated the labor spent upon it and raised the rent correspondingly. If the tenant had agreed to pay \$20 a year for his three or four acres of stony soil, he was told that having cleared and drained it he would have to pay \$40.

Does the honest, hard-working American, who believes in paying his rent with his other debts, begin to see why the Irish tenant has been an agitator and a lawbreaker for generations? Remember, there was no law to which he could appeal. He was as much at the mercy of the landlord as the negro of the South was at the mercy of his owner. The titled proprietor in England left everything to the middleman or to his own personal agent. The tenant was ground between the agent and the soil. There was no escape.

Suppose he paid the increase ordered, nothing more nor less than a penalty for his industry. The next year his land yielded a crop. Again the agent came, estimated the value of the yield and raised the rent again. So the grinding went on, from year to year, the uttermost farthing being wrung from the farmer, until the inevitable time came when he could not pay. Having spent himself on the land, living on the verge of starvation in order to meet the steadily increasing demands of the landlord, knowing that the harder he worked the more he must pay, he found himself at last at the end of his resources. He could not pay the increased rent. Again there was no choice. By simple, cheap and effective process of law the tenant and his family were evicted, thrown out on the roadside to die or to start the weary struggle afresh in some new patch of bog or rocky hillside.

IGERIA





And what became of the product of his labor? Surely he could dispose of his interest in the land, the drains he had dug, the fences and houses and barns he had built? Not to the extent of one farthing. By the very process of eviction all improvements passed into the possession of the landlord. The starving family on the roadside were even poorer than before they started. They might go where they would. All the landlord's agent had to do was to take a new tenant. This new tenant could afford to pay the high rent demanded, for he found a farm and buildings ready to support his family. He took possession, and remained until the wrenching of the thumbscrews each year brought him, too, to the limit of his ability to pay, and then he, too, was thrown out.

Such, in brief, was the system of land tenure in Ireland for generations. Nor is this the worst. The tenant was subject to eviction not only for non-payment of rent, but absolutely at the whim or caprice of the landlord or agent. The serving of a formal notice toward the end of the year was sufficient. And the farmer was summarily ejected from his home; the labor of years, the property he had actually made with his own hands, was stolen.

These statements are so astounding to one who meets the facts for the first time that I am constrained to quote English authority for them:

Lord Normanby—"In Ireland the landlord has a monopoly of the means of existence, and has a power for enforcing his bargains which does not exist elsewhere—the power of starvation."

Mr. Nassau Senior—"The treaty between landlord and tenant in Ireland is not a calm bargain in which the tenant, having offered what he thinks the land worth, cares little whether his offer be accepted or not; it is a struggle, like the struggle to buy bread in a besieged town, or to buy water in an African caravan."

John Bright—"Ireland is a land of evictions—a word which, I suspect, is scarcely known in any other civilized country. It is a country from which thousands have been driven by the will of the landlords and the power of the law."

The Devon Commission—"It seems neither extraordinary nor unreasonable that a tenant quitting a farm, either at his own desire or from any difference with his landlord, should obtain a sum of money in remuneration for his expenditure."

Poulet Scrope, M. P.—"Though God gave the land of Ireland to the people of Ireland—to the many—the law has given it unconditionally to the few. Even in the best of times, if the landlord refuses to the peasant the holding of a plot of land, if other starving wretches outbid his offer for the patch of soil whose possession



is as necessary to his existence as the air he breathes; if sickness or misfortune prevent his punctual payment of the enormous rent he has promised, and he and his family are ejected from the cabin which perhaps sheltered him from his birth—what remains? He must die! The law allows him no other alternative."

Preamble of Land Reform Bill, 1836—"Whereas, It has long been the general practice in Ireland that all buildings have been erected and kept in repair, and all improvements have been made by the tenant and at his cost; and, whereas, the power of the landlord in recovering rent and in evicting tenants from their holdings, and enforcing claims of every description by means of distress and ejectment, have been strengthened and extended by various acts; and, whereas, it is therefore just and expedient that a reasonable protection should be afforded to tenants making permanent and beneficial improvements on lands and tenements held for limited periods; therefore, be it enacted, etc."

T. W. Russell, M. P.—"The common law in regard to tenants' improvements, previous to the act of 1881, was that they belonged to the landlord. This law put into the landlords' pockets hundreds of thousands of pounds of the tenants' capital. It enabled the landlords to gather where they had not strewed, to reap where they had not sown; it enabled them to rob the tenants by what is called 'due process of law.'"

This is a brief explanation, supplied by impartial authority, of the villainous conditions under which the Irish farmers existed for generations. In the province of Ulster, as already stated, the large proportion of English and Scotch settlers caused the growth of a more equitable arrangement, known to this day as the Ulster Custom. It was legalized and extended in 1870. Under it the tenant has a proprietary interest in his land, on account of any improvements he has made. The landlords are now fighting bitterly to abrogate the custom. But, taking Ireland as a whole, the mildest term to apply to the land system as it was is "legalized robbery of the poor." It remains now to show how justice is tardily winning its way.

## IV

### EFFECTS OF LANDLORDISM

Under the grotesque land system which I have attempted to describe the condition of the Irish peasantry—practically the whole population—steadily became worse. The population—4,000,000 in 1800—more than doubled in the next fifty years, while poverty continued its remorseless spread. The situation may be imagined from an official description of conditions in certain districts only ten years ago. A report presented by Lord Balfour, of Burleigh, and Lord Blair Balfour said:

“In these districts there are two classes, namely, the poor and the destitute. There are hardly any resident gentry; there are a few traders and officials, but nearly all the inhabitants are either poor or on the verge of poverty.”

How much worse must it have been seventy-five years ago, fifty years before the most elementary reform was adopted! Says Mr. T. W. Russell:

“The country was, to a large extent, a rabbit-warren of paupers and beggars. The laws regulating the tenure of land—land being the sole source of livelihood for the great mass of the people—were perhaps the most iniquitous and unjust that ever disgraced any statute book in a civilized country. Trade and commerce were paralyzed. Law had ceased to be a terror to evildoers, because no punishment that it was capable of awarding could be worse than the fate of the dumb millions condemned to what was little better than a living death.”

Yet it was not until 1835 to 1843 that the heartrending appeals of the Irish people could obtain even a hearing. During that period three bills were introduced, all having substantially the same objects—to protect the tenant against capricious eviction and to secure to him reasonable compensation, on being evicted, for the improvements which he had made on the land by his own unaided labor. And the result?

Every bill, these and others, was defeated, voted down contemptuously by the Parliament, where the landlords were in absolute control. Even the plea that the systematic robbery of the tenants' labor should cease was denied. In 1845 the commission headed by the Earl of Devon reported. I have already quoted some of its recommendations. Surely this might have been accepted as a just estimate of the terrible conditions. Yet twenty-five years passed before the English government raised a hand to ameliorate the cruel injustice of the land system. Gladstone's bill of 1870 was the first act of mercy.

But long before this conditions which had been shocking had become ghastly. As had been shown, even in years when crops were reasonably good, the people were barely able to pay the exorbitant rents of their masters and keep life in their own bodies, while a touch of blight or unseasonable frost, or any reduction in the crop yield, caused universal destitution. And then the yield was a huge crop of evictions. With the people thus constantly on the edge of starvation, there befell the frightful catastrophe of the great famine. Potatoes formed almost the only food of the peasantry. In 1845 the potato disease appeared, and in 1846-47 the whole crop vanished. The story of those years forms probably the most ghastly record of modern times. There is no need to retell it here. Men, women and children starved to death by thousands. The official report of the Census Commission in 1851, after commenting upon the frightful death rate, said this:

"But no pen has recorded the numbers of the forlorn and starving who perished by the wayside or in the ditches, or of the mournful groups, sometimes whole families, who lay down and died, one after another, upon the floor of their cabin, and so remained uncoffined and unburied until chance unveiled the appalling scene. No such amount of suffering and misery has been chronicled in Irish history since the days of Edward Bruce; and yet, through all, the forbearance of the Irish peasantry and the calm submission with which they bore the deadliest ills that can fall on man can scarcely be paralleled in the annals of any people."

"But at least," says the justice-loving American, "the

sufferings of the famine days brought some good. It called attention to the poverty of the people and the injustice of the system whereby they were made land slaves to the landlords."

Honest Englishmen to-day are ashamed that such a supposition is not true. Not only did the famine fail to hasten mercy, but it was used by the landlords to inflict further hardship and suffering upon the helpless people. Evictions were enforced by wholesale. Only one question was put to the tenants: "Could they pay the rent?" As they could not even buy food, the question answered itself. And by thousands and tens of thousands the starving peasants were turned out on the roadside. This, of course, is ancient history, and the impatient reader demands to know what the famine of 1847 has to do with conditions in Ireland in 1902. It has everything to do with it. For it was the famine and the evictions which followed which started the flight of the Irish from their own land, to continue to this day. There are thousands who read this story whose fathers or grandfathers were victims of the eviction raids of '47, and who went, with countless thousands of their countrymen, to seek life and liberty in the United States.

The record of Irish emigration during the last fifty years must be appalling to those whose hearts leap with patriotic love for the stricken land. The famine and the cruelty of the laws caused a veritable stampede to America. Thousands who sailed never reached the other side of the ocean, for the rush was so great that "coffin ships" laden with emigrants put out from Irish ports and foundered at sea. But millions did make the sad journey safely. The current then set in motion has never ceased. Year after year it has flowed westward, the young and vigorous of the race giving up the struggle here and seeking justice in a strange land. Between 1851 and 1900, 3,841,419 persons emigrated from Ireland. Even the reforms of the last thirty years have hardly checked the tide to an appreciable extent. Not until full justice and liberty are granted to Ireland will her sons and daughters find life supportable in the land they love.

What a frightful record it is! Of the 9,000,000 who

inhabited Ireland in 1845, more than half have disappeared by death and emigration. Half a nation has been swept away, and the rest are going. For even to-day no ship leaves these shores without Irish emigrants, and the deaths are greater in number than the births. Ireland is slowly perishing.

But what of the amelioration already accomplished? The reforms adopted during the last thirty years amount to a revolution, yet they have accomplished only a fraction of what is necessary. A brief review of present laws must be given.

The turning point was the Fenian Rebellion of 1866. The morality of that uprising need not be discussed here, but the fact remains that the rebellion attracted the attention which no appeals had been able to attract; that within five years the first reform, fought for at the cost of blood and tears, wretchedness and starvation, through seventy long years, was finally won. John Bright was the first Protestant Englishman of note to champion the cause of oppressed Ireland, and to do so he braved calumny, abuse and even ostracism. Then arose Gladstone, that lion in statesmanship, whose name must ever be honored by the Irish people.

His Act of 1870, though to-day we regard it as the merest step toward justice, was in those days a priceless boon to the starving nation. It established for the first time and for all time that the tenant who devotes years of labor to clearing land and erecting buildings thereby acquires a proprietary interest in the whole, and that the product of his toil cannot be taken from him without payment. The principle was not stated in its full strength, but later acts which superseded the Act of 1870 made the foundation solid. Further, and quite as important, the act forbade capricious eviction, or rather provided that such summary action should be accompanied by remuneration.

Needless to say, the right of the landlord to evict a tenant under certain circumstances has never been questioned. The only thing restricted was the custom of arbitrary eviction without cause. An elaborate system of compensation was established, whereby the evicted tenant, or the tenant leaving his farm for whatever cause, had a claim for remuneration for the improvements he had made, and also for ejection, if

such were invoked against his will. This, though few persons realized it, was a recognition of the fact that the occupying tenant, by his labor, created not only a property right, but an occupation right. This was the beginning of the doom of landlordism, now moving irresistibly to its end.

As might have been expected, as soon as the landlords awoke to the significance of the law some of them began a systematic campaign to evade its provisions.

A word of explanation is due here. There is no necessity to say that all landlords are not greedy oppressors. There have been and are to-day among them men of the very highest principle—men who believe in and practice fair dealing with their tenants. But it is equally true that most of them have been obdurate and selfish in taking advantage of unjust laws. But it should be remembered that all this oppression cannot be charged to titled Englishmen, for the following reason:

Appalled by the horrors of the famine, the Parliament, with the usual misconception of the trouble, applied the remedy of changing landlords. It was deemed wise that landlords who, through their own improvidence or the burden of ancestral debts, could not discharge the obligations of landlordism as it existed in England—mark the ignorance—should be compelled to give up their holdings. The cry went up that Ireland needed capital. Therefore, in 1848 the Incumbered Estates Act was passed. Sir Charles Russell, afterward Lord Chief Justice, said of it a few years ago:

“It is hardly conceivable that a Legislature should have so misconceived the position. What did the act do? It sold the estates of the bankrupt landlords to men with capital, who were mainly jobbers in land, sold them with the accumulated improvements and interests of the tenants and without the slightest protection to the tenants against forfeiture and confiscation of these improvements by the new owners.

“It proved a cause of the gravest evil, for it is literally true to say that among the worst cases of landlord oppression in Ireland have been the cases of men who, with their fresh capital, came in and bought these estates; jobbers in land who were not restrained by any feelings of kindness because of ancient connection with an ancient peasantry and an ancient

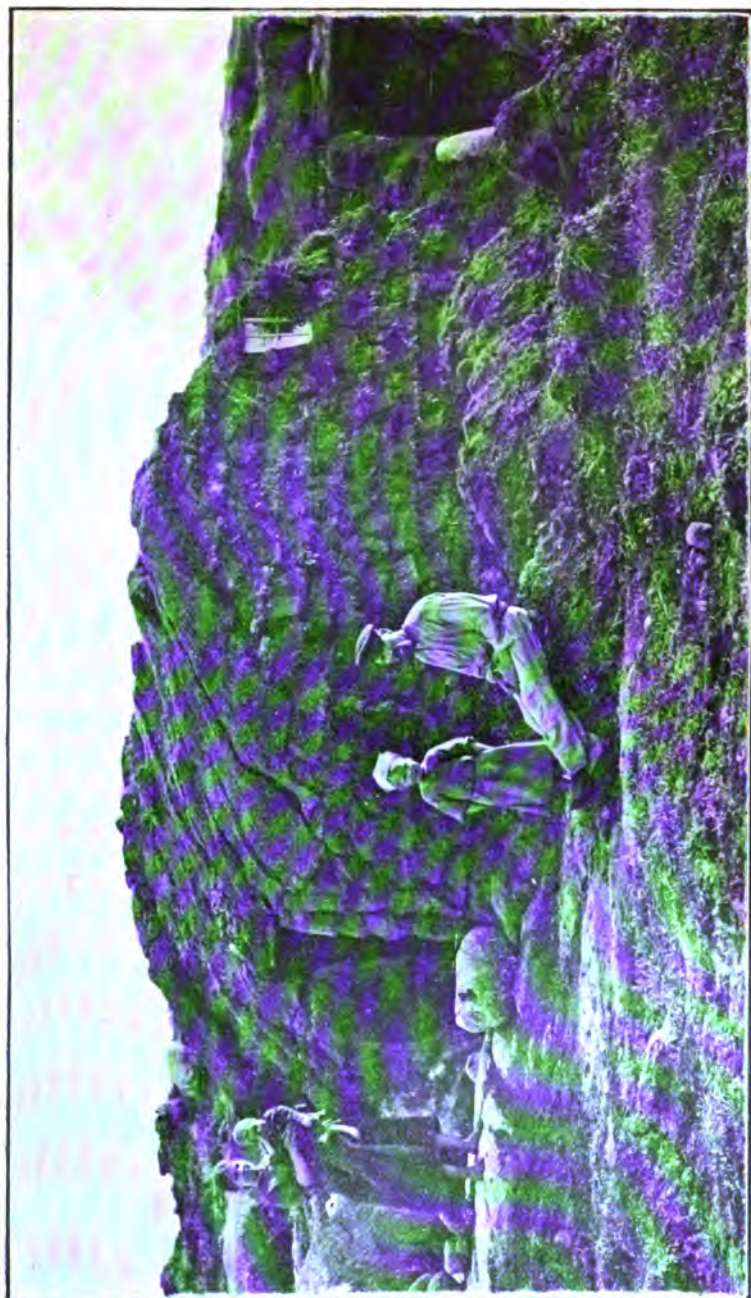
proprietary house. I have seen property after property sold in that court, in which, as an inducement to the intending buyer, were held forth the alleged low rentals at which the property was then let and the possibility that he might, by another turn of the screw, raise the rent and increase his percentage return on the land."

When they came to take advantage of the Act of 1870, therefore, many of the tenants found that the landlords, those whose only idea was to squeeze the last penny out of the land, had methods of evasion. The act provided no means for resisting capricious rent-raising. Hence the landlord, compelled to compensate an evicted tenant for that tenant's buildings and improvements, simply recouped himself by raising the rent to the incoming tenant. Again, by working on the tenants' fears of being dispossessed without cause, they induced many of them to sign long-term leases, the harassed farmer being willing to sign almost any contract so as to be assured of possession of his farm for a stated period. Sir Charles Russell said:

"Leases were forced upon the tenants wholesale; contracts were made by which the tenants contracted themselves out of benefits of the act."

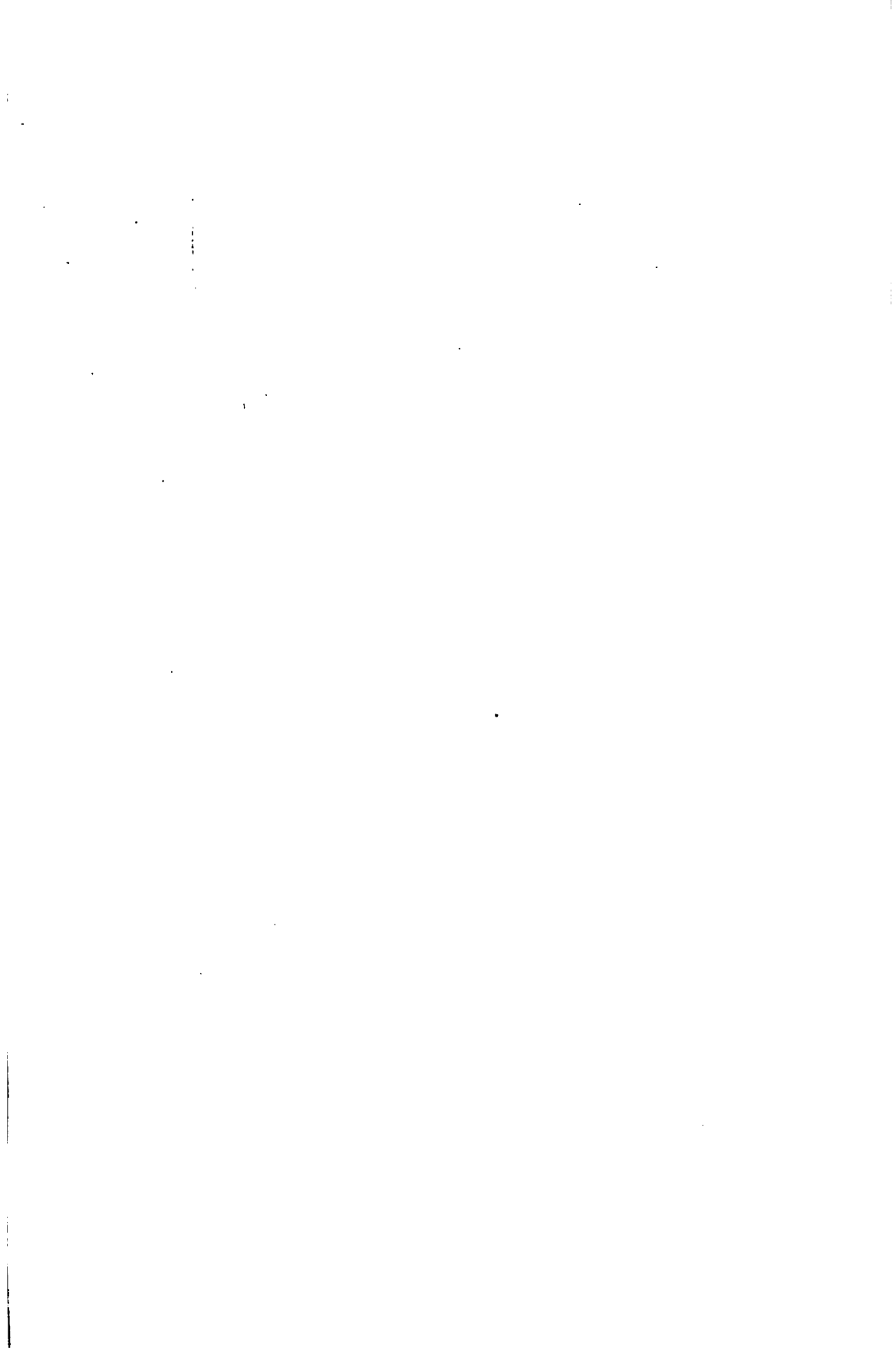
This law was therefore soon made useless. Then came bad crop seasons, in 1879-80. As was inevitable, the tenants could not stand the strain, living always, as they did, at the limit of their resources. Again wholesale evictions took place. The Land League was formed, and became a terrible power, supported chiefly by the money of Irishmen in America. The whole land was racked with crime. Boycotting, cattle-maiming, assault, burning, assassination shocked the world. And once more the Irish people learned the dangerous lesson that an outburst of violence was always followed by concession. The Bessborough Commission reported, and the way was clear for the great charter of the Irish farmer, the Act of 1881.

Having reached this point, we may properly hasten the review. The bill established three great principles—the three identical principles which had been fought for by one of the Land Leagues in 1851—namely, fair rent, fixity of tenure, free sale. These were known then, and are known



**TURF HUT OCCUPIED BY AN EVICTED FAMILY.**





now, as the three F's, and their adoption was the beginning of justice for the Irish farmer. Under these provisions the law discriminated between the land, the property of the landlord, and the improvements, the property of the tenant. A tribunal was created to hear evidence impartially and periodically to fix reasonable rents upon the lands; the improvements were not to be alienated from the tenant. His tenure was to be fixed—he could not be evicted except for refusal to pay the rents named by the court, or other reasonable cause. And he had a certain right of sale of his interest in the property.

This bill, as stated, conferred upon the tenants the greatest measure of justice they had ever received. But it had serious defects. It applied only to yearly tenants. Leaseholders—there were 35,000 of them—were excluded from the benefits. Thus one farmer could claim the protection of the court, while his neighbor a hundred yards away was powerless. It was six years before this injustice was remedied in part and nine years before it was remedied completely. Since that time more than 30,000 leaseholders have had their rents reduced by the court. But, as before, the administration of the law was defective. An inquiry in 1894 showed that the valuations had been made too high and that under a famous decision—*Adams vs. Dunseath*—the landlords were still collecting rent upon houses and other improvements made by the tenants. Supplemental bills in 1887, 1890 and 1896 improved matters very much. But still there was a weak point, and it still exists. That is, the very Land Commission in whose hands rest the poor fortunes of the tenants. On this point I quote Mr. T. W. Russell:

“The commission now consists of two judges of the Supreme Court and four laymen. Out of the six members of this great department, which deals with almost the entire landed property of the country, only two have even the most elementary knowledge of land, and only one is recognized by the tenants as having the slightest regard for their interests. This is the exact position to-day. No person in Ireland, be he landlord or tenant, professes to have the slightest confidence in this court. It is not that anybody imputes or

thinks of corruption—nothing of the kind—but it is universally felt that bias and prejudice exist to such an extent as morally to invalidate its whole procedure.”

Furthermore, the court has failed to settle the dispute over improvements made by tenants. The rents, it should be understood, are fixed for periods of fifteen years. A tenant may have proved to the court in 1882 that he erected certain buildings and made certain improvements. But at the end of the period he must prove it all over again in order to get a new, reasonable valuation. Many of the records have disappeared, witnesses are dead or abroad—and the landlord calmly demands proof of every single claim advanced. Facing these difficulties, and knowing that he can get justice only by long litigation and at great proportionate expense, it is no wonder that the hapless tenant still complains.

This, then, is the record of the hundred years, very briefly and imperfectly told. When those who hope for Ireland's future hear sneers about “chronic discontent” and “foolish agitation,” let them ask the critics of a struggling people to remember these things: That for seventy years of the last century—the century of enlightenment and progress—the Irish peasantry groaned under a villainous system of oppression and robbery, and that all their appeals went unheard; that the reform of 1870 was rendered invalid by the astute maneuvers of unscrupulous landholders; that even the great Act of 1881 and those which followed have left many thousands in misery; that to-day, in this year of grace 1902, a half million people are living under conditions which are a disgrace to civilization, and that the poverty and destitution—I have seen a little and am sick with it—are to-day due wholly and solely to the iniquities of the land system.

Much, truly, has been gained in the last thirty years. But still the cry of Ireland, the cry of a suffering nation, is heard through the earth. In the name of gratitude and common sense, says the impatient American, what do these Irish want more? We shall see.

## V

### \* VIEWS OF AN AGITATOR

Though the little town of Westport is almost at the extreme western part of Ireland, a leisurely train made the journey from Dublin in about seven hours. This is to be the starting point for a personal investigation of the land problem, which, it is hoped, will result in presenting a clear picture of the conditions which exist to-day because of centuries of misgovernment.

The primary object in coming here was to see William O'Brien, M. P., whose name is written near the top of that long roll of Irish "rebels." What manner of man was I to find in this terrible agitator? Would I see him fashioning bombs in a secret laboratory, or issuing manifestoes of violence against the patient English government? Would he denounce the royal family and Dublin Castle and hiss threats of bloody revolution?

A two-mile drive on a jaunting car through the cold winter twilight brought me to the home of the famous leader. It is on the shore of Westport Bay, with its dotted islets. Six or eight miles away rises the rugged cone of Croagh Patrick, whence the Saint, with bell and voice, is said to have driven the serpents into the sea. A roomy cottage, one story, covered with green vines and set in a pretty garden; inside, big, comfortable rooms; the library table littered with papers, the walls lined with books; dainty ornaments, fine pictures, a blazing fire of peat; a bearded man, whose eyes twinkled through thick glasses, and whose air suggested the student and not the leader—this was the home of the agitator and the man himself.

\*This chapter was written in Westport, County Mayo, in December, 1902. Mr. O'Brien withdrew in 1908 from active association with the leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party, because of differences upon details of policy, but his sympathy with the Irish cause and his knowledge of Irish affairs have never been questioned.

We talked for nearly two hours. I shall try to summarize Mr. O'Brien's statements, which have a vital bearing upon the central question of the land.

"As you are already aware," he said, "the only solution of the problem is to restore the land to the people from whose ancestors it was taken by force and fraud, and the restoration is to be made by purchase, which will do ample justice to the present owners.

"But nature and the operation of the laws have divided the problem into two parts. In the east, where the land is rich, the only thing necessary is to arrange that the tenants may purchase their holdings, which in most cases are sufficient to support them. But in the west the problem is entirely different and entirely distinct. Here we have what are known as congested districts. The population is not excessive—indeed, it is only a fraction of what the land can support—but it is congested in districts where the land is so poor that the life of the people is nothing less than long-drawn-out misery.

"In a single sentence, the condition is this—where there is plenty of good land, there are no people; where there is no land but bog and rocky mountain side, there the people are huddled in poverty and destitution. These congested districts comprise a large part of Galway, Mayo and Donegal, with portions of Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork counties.

"As you travel through the country, as you say you are going to do, you will observe personally the frightful conditions that prevail. But it is officially described in eloquent terms. These unhappy districts for the last eleven years have been under the charge of the Congested Districts Board, a body created under the Purchase of Land Act of 1891.

"Under that act a congested district is one where more than twenty per cent. of the population live in electoral divisions, of which the total ratable value, divided by the population, gives a sum of less than thirty shillings for each person; in plainer terms, where the yearly rental of the property upon which the people live is less than \$7.50 for each person.

"The districts altogether comprise more than 3,500,000 acres, and the basis of taxation amounts to about \$5 for each person. Here are half a million people, therefore, who are rated as possessing property worth only \$5 a year each. That gives a faint idea of how close they are to destitution, even in the best of seasons.

"Now, I must emphasize the fact that the trouble is not due to over-population. On the contrary, famine, persecution and emigration have drained the country of millions who ought to be here. There are millions of acres of land fit for rich crops, but from these the people are shut out and are herded on miserable patches which barely keep them from starvation. The task is to redistribute the population, to acquire the rich lands from the present owners and divide them up among the suffering people. In a word, we must recolonize practically the whole of the western part of Ireland. After centuries of so-called civilized government, we must begin afresh, as though this were a new country.

"Since you have studied the question somewhat, I do not need to tell you that the pitiable conditions now existing are not due to lack of thrift or endeavor on the part of the people. You know the history of the wars and confiscations and the outrageous system of land tenure, which combined to make the people the absolute slaves of the landlords. It was during and after the famine years of 1846-47 that the great "clearing out" was accomplished. The land stricken by loss of crops and the people weakened by hunger and disease, they were wholly powerless against the savagery of the land laws and the brutality of some of the landlords. By countless thousands they were driven from their farms. In many cases there was the excuse that the tenant could not pay rent. In many more, families which did not owe a shilling of arrears were turned out with the rest.

"At that time, you remember, and until 1881, the landlord could dispossess the tenant at will and seize the houses and other improvements which the tenant had made by years of labor. Under these cruel laws, then, whole districts were depopulated, and the unfortunate people had to start afresh.

"Where could they go? Nearly every acre of good land was held by the landlords, and these refused to rent.

Tired of the constant struggle of the tenants against injustice, the owners let their great domains to big grazers. In your tours you will see miles upon miles of the best land in Ireland, once the homes of thousands of people, now given over to cattle and sheep.

"And where did the people go? You will find them, too. You will find them in the bogs, on the waste land; their miserable hovels clinging to the hillsides, where their poor little crops try to struggle up through rocks and stones. Driven there by remorseless laws, with rich land all about them, they toil in the barrens, fighting desperately against starvation—and still paying rent.

"You will see with your own eyes how poor these people are. But let me tell you one thing—and you will find this in official reports: The people actually would starve if they depended upon the miserable patches for which they pay exorbitant rents.

"They are supported and kept alive by remittances from their relatives in America and England.

"This will seem incredible to you when I say that it applies, not to a family here and there, or to scattered localities, but to thousands upon thousands of families, to nearly half a million souls. Every year there is a huge migration to England and Scotland. By thousands the strongest go to work on the farms during the summer and harvest in order to earn a few pounds which shall keep them and their families alive during the winter and meet the demands of the landlords for rent. The men go, the youths go, the boys go, the girls as young as fifteen and sixteen go, some for three months, some for six or eight months in each year.

"Leaving one or two of each family—usually the mother and younger children—to care for the cabin and potato patch and the pig, they travel to England and Scotland, and there tramp from farm to farm, working from dawn to dusk and sleeping in outhouses, so that they may earn the price of food and rent for the winter. Even this terrible sacrifice is not enough, and thousands are kept from dying of hunger only by the money sent from relatives in America.

"This is the problem of the West, the most pressing problem which confronts us, for it is a problem of life and

death. It is not new. It has been with us for fifty years. But while death and emigration have decimated the people, the English government has been blind and deaf. At last we see hope ahead."

"What is the plan of relief?" I asked.

"There is only one solution," answered Mr. O'Brien. "Landlordism must be abolished. The people must be rescued from the bogs and barrens and placed on good lands. All they need is a chance. Give them a decent patch of good land and they will become self-supporting rapidly."

"And how can this transfer be effected with justice to the landlords and justice to the tenants?"

"The only possible method is purchase by the government for the people, with easy terms of repayment. Both landlords and tenants are heartily sick of the present system.

"Gladstone's Act of 1881 was a magnificent advance for us, but its workings have not been satisfactory. It established a land commission, which fixes so-called fair rents for periods of fifteen years. The rents, where applications have been made, have been greatly reduced, which does not please the landlords. But the members of the commission have no practical knowledge of land values, hence most of their judgments are unfair to the tenants.

"Besides, in the congested districts the vital question is not to reduce the rents, but to let the people have lands which are capable of yielding life-sustaining crops. There are thousands of 'farms' which are so wretched that, even if the tenants had them rent free, they could not raise enough on them to feed their families. The good lands must be purchased and divided up among the people. They will then work out their own salvation.

"Roughly speaking, the plan is for the government to buy out the landlords by a certain number of yearly payments and resell to the tenants in instalments which shall amount to a just rental, and which will liquidate the purchase in a certain number of years.

"The difficulty, of course, is to bridge over the difference between what the landlord is willing to accept and what the tenant is able to pay. This suggestion is made: Under the various purchase acts, the average term of purchase



would be eighteen years. Suppose that on the basis of present rents the landlords should get payments for twenty years, while the tenant should be expected to pay for only sixteen years. Then let the government assume the payments for the other four years.

"But, you say, how can this immense burden be placed upon the innocent English taxpayer? No such thing is contemplated. Ireland will pay the whole bill. Let there be an equitable redistribution of expenses, and she will not need to ask for a penny of English money.

"For instance, take the police, the Royal Irish Constabulary. This great force, numbering 13,000 men, is controlled absolutely from London, is paid for by the Irish people and is kept up solely to help the landlords in their struggle against the tenants. Once settle the land question, and the need for this great standing army disappears. Let the people have good lands, fit to support life, and all cause for agitation disappears.

"There will be no more organizations against landlords, no more campaigns against paying rent, for then the rent will be purchase money, and no more outbursts of violence. The people will be busy tilling their land and paying for it. Once give them a chance to support themselves and Ireland will have a peace such as she has not known for generations.

"Land purchase, of course, has been going on for years, but the process is desperately slow. The Congested Districts Board is empowered to negotiate with landlords willing to sell; but the result, while it proves the solution of the problem, has affected only a few of the immense number of sufferers.

"Therefore, to solve the problem completely and finally, the purchase must be universal, and the misery of a half million people pleads that it should be immediate. Compulsion, I believe, is the only adequate plan. Action must be taken wholesale, and at once, if we are to relieve the sufferings of Ireland and stop the frightful drain of emigration.

"In this province of Connaught there are more than 2,000,000 acres of rich land, on which you will find only cattle, sheep and a few herdsmen. Let down the bars of



A RELIC OF EVICTION DAYS.



TO BE REPLACED BY A DECENT HOME.



law and prejudice, let the people buy back the lands from which they were driven, and there will be provided a country capable of supporting in comfort twice the population which now drags out a miserable existence."

I have given, I believe, a correct statement of Mr. O'Brien's views as he gave them to me, although I do not assert that the words are precisely his own.

Upon taking leave of him at the door of his hospitable home I could not help wondering that this mild-spoken, studious man, whose every word seemed to ring with common sense and sympathy, has been treated as a dangerous character, a seditionist and an enemy to the state, and that he had spent dreary months in prison, treated as a malefactor, because of the fight he has waged for justice for the Irish people.

Perhaps, as they study his statement, readers will wonder the same thing.

Having traced the history of the land laws under which Ireland has suffered, and having noted the views of one of the political leaders, it will be useful to check the statements made with official records. Before leaving this district, therefore, I have talked at length with members of the Westport District Council (the local government body), and have examined a report made by their special committee which investigated a few weeks ago the condition of the people. To those who would turn wearily from the survey of figures, I would say only this: The figures deal with human beings. They are elements in an equation of life and death. They do not deal with mathematics, but with men and women and children.

The district of Westport has a population of 37,381 and a (yearly) valuation of \$219,805, or a little more than \$5 for each person. Its area is 347,819 acres, enough to give each individual nearly ten acres, or each family fifty acres. There is, therefore, no scarcity of land. But what is the actual distribution?

There are 5322 occupiers of land. Of these, 3041 are rated under \$20 and 4089 in all under \$40. Of the remainder, at least 500 are barely outside the limit of extreme

poverty. But the most frightful truth is that 4089 occupiers, and that means 20,000 persons, are crowded on to holdings which by no stretch of imagination can be considered capable of sustaining life in their bodies. With boundless, rolling plains of rich lands stretching on every side of them; possessing health and strength and inspired with a pathetic eagerness to work, these 20,000 men and women and children are herded in the barrens, where they would actually die of hunger were it not for the assistance sent to them by those who have been able to emigrate to America. And this condition is not one peculiar to a season of famine. It exists year after year, from generation to generation; one unending, heartbreaking struggle with hunger. I quote the official report:

"The inhabitants are only preserved from year to year from perishing of famine by the earnings of the adult male population in their annual migration to England and Scotland and by the remittances of their relatives in America. Two special trains per week carry emigrants to Queenstown for America, these being almost exclusively young men and women from fifteen to thirty-five years old, in the flower of their age and strength.

"From Westport alone there left in the season of 1901 4178 harvesters for England and Scotland. The total emigration from the county since 1851 has been 164,589. From this district alone 30,000 have gone—nearly as many as the present population."

Nearly 350,000 acres of land, yet even the remnant of population left by famine and emigration is drained from year to year, simply because the unhappy people cannot find places to live. Even though these are but figures, could anything picture more vividly the monstrous conditions under which these peasants are condemned to suffer?

And the annual migration to England and Scotland, eloquent as it is of insupportable conditions, has a distinct and grievous effect upon the difficulties of existence. The little farms are deprived of the work and care of the men and boys. Proper methods of cultivation are impossible; the land, poor at best, suffers neglect, and outraged nature takes revenge. There is no rotation of crops. Year after

year the worn-out soil is called upon to yield the staple food, potatoes. As a result, the crops grow steadily less. In England the carefully tended soil will produce more than six tons of potatoes to the acre. In Westport district the yield has fallen below three tons an acre. Here is a striking picture of human wretchedness, as officially reported:

"The normal conditions of life of 20,000 of the population of this district are: Their holdings are too small and too exhausted to support life, the soil yearly becoming more unfit for cultivation; three-fourths of the adult male population are banished from their families and country for half the year in search of the hardest and most poorly recompensed labor, and there is a constant danger that the ordinary privations of every winter will be turned into actual and general famine by a few weeks' unfavorable weather, by a falling off in the English labor market or by any serious depression of American trade which may cut off their relatives' power of relieving them."

Is there a country on the face of the globe where white people make their homes in which conditions of such dismal poverty can be found? True, this is the official story of only one district, but the report says, and I have proved the statement by personal observation of hundreds of miles of territory, that the same story may be told of every district in the West. The land decaying, the people dying or expatriating themselves, privation and hunger their constant companions, famine an ever-present specter—this is civilization within a day's journey of the world's greatest capital.

Now, what is the cause of this unnatural condition? We have shown that it is lack of land. The people have been tortured by land hunger for generations. Yet all around them lie boundless fields which ache for cultivation, which actually are lapsing back to barrens because they do not feel the plow. There are in County Mayo 1,327,000 acres. Excluding towns, water area and those parts which are absolutely barren, this is the proportion:

Growing cereals and green crops, 93,681 acres; pasturing cattle and sheep, 644,463 acres.

The people starve on one-seventh of the land, and that the meanest to be found; the cattle grow fat on the other

six-sevenths, which is degenerating year by year into wild meadow land.

Take the Westport district. It comprises 347,819 acres. Of this area, only 15,000 acres are available to raise food for the people. Who holds the rest of the land? The occupiers may be divided into two classes—those men or their descendants who drove the people from their farms by eviction, and grazers who pasture their cattle where there were once comfortable homes and fields. To use figures again, 52,000 acres are held by thirteen landlords and 98,000 acres by sixty-six grazers. It will be interesting to note where some of these persons live. Among the grazers are A. H. Boswell, London, 24,763 acres; Captain Laprimandaye, London, 10,064 acres; Colonel Clive, London, 15,968 acres; trustees of Achill Mission, 10,000 acres. And among the landlords we find the Marquis of Sligo, 27,402 acres; W. C. Kennedy, London, 3439 acres, and the Rev. W. C. Bellingham, London, 8955 acres. Of the sixty-six grazers, only five reside in the district.

To clinch the injustice of the land distribution, it is only necessary to add that most of the land now used for pasturing the cattle of landlords and capitalists was reclaimed by the arduous toil of the people who were evicted from it.

The least consideration will show, therefore, that the only remedy for this cruel system of injustice is to place the people back on the land taken from them. Nature herself is proclaiming the necessity for this. When the landlords and the money lenders who acquired incumbered estates drove the people forth from their holdings they were inspired by the same fever for consolidation which we observe now in industrial circles. They were tired of the never-ending pleas and protests of their tenants about excessive rents and the seizure of improvements. Some of them sought to conduct their immense holdings as consolidated farms, but the greater number turned them into pasture land and rented them to grazers. Both schemes during recent years have proved to be commercial failures as well as cruelly unjust. The degeneracy of the land and the competition of American cattle have conspired to reduce the profits of grazing almost to the vanishing point. The land

cries out for cultivation, and the starving people, imprisoned on their barren patches, are living arguments that the cry should be heard.

It begins to be seen now that the recolonization of the West of Ireland offers the only refuge from the intolerable conditions prevailing. There must be wholesale migration of families from the congested districts to the fertile lands. The population, instead of being confined to the poorest lands, must be spread over the immense arable territory, which is ready to yield generous crops.

Purchase from the landlords is, of course, the only means of accomplishing this. Under various acts of Parliament purchase has been authorized, and the Congested Districts Board is empowered to negotiate with landlords willing to sell. But the result so far, while it amply justifies the procedure, has been trifling in extent. There remains only the complete abolition of landlordism by a scheme of purchase which shall be compulsory or of a nature so attractive that it will be universally accepted by the landlords.



## VI

### \* LIFE UNDER LANDLORDISM

It is a gray day in Kiltimagh. The clouds lie close down over the green-gray land, and the short winter sun makes little more than twilight at noon. But it is a fair day, too, and as the jaunting car passes down the main street of the village the pony has to push his way through a jostling mass of cattle and sheep and pigs and tiny donkeys and lusty peasant folk. They are all jumbled together in the muddy street, buyers and sellers and sold, with the old, gray houses and shops on either side, with the clamor of chaffering and the reek of the byres ascending ceaselessly, and the cold, damp wind of winter whistling through it all.

My source of information here was not to be the political leader, or even the official report, but the people themselves. I was to visit them in their homes, see their little farms, observe with my own eyes how they exist under the system which has burdened them for a hundred years and more. My guide was to be the Rev. Denis O'Hara, parish priest, who is the intellect of the poor little community. I found him in the plain, gray parish house, beside the stately church, which looks so strangely magnificent amid the poverty of the village and the cruel desolation of the surrounding country. He greeted me with kindly courtesy and my mission with heartfelt enthusiasm.

"It is not often," he said, "that I can welcome a visitor from America. Yet this little town is closely bound to your far-away country. There is not a family in the parish which has not a member in America, and more go every year."

Father O'Hara has the care of 4500 men and women and children, and his days are fully occupied, yet he consented cheerfully to guide me through his parish.

"I have been fighting for my people for twenty-three

\* Chapters VI and VII were written in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, in December, 1902.

years," he said, "and it would be strange if I could not spare a few hours to show you their homes, when the object is to tell the people of America how grievously they suffer."

So we climbed on the jaunting car, wrapped ourselves in rugs against the bitter wind and drove through the crowded fair out into the open country, the white-haired priest explaining as we went. The land itself was poverty made manifest. On the higher parts it was divided into little patches, separated by walls of loose stones. The soil, though men and women had spent years of toil upon it, was still sown with stones, through which the sparse grass or crops had to fight their way. In the hollows lay hundreds upon hundreds of acres of bog, covered with the coarse, brown heather and scarred here and there with ditches, where the people cut the turf they use for fuel.

"All these, as you see," said Father O'Hara, "are bad lands, utterly incapable of supporting life decently. The families whose poor cabins you see here and there were evicted years ago from the rich lands which lie round about. Some of them could not pay the excessive rents imposed by the landlords; some of them were turned out simply because the owners preferred to let the lands to grazers. The result was the same in both cases. The people, whose labor had reclaimed the lands and made them fit to grow crops, were driven out. They had to go somewhere. All could not raise the money to emigrate, although thousands did. Those who remained had to beg permission to make new homes here, on these hillside patches of stony ground and down in the bogs yonder."

"But how do they support themselves from such wretched land as this?"

"Ah, they do not. That would be quite impossible. Two acres or three acres or four acres, as the holdings run, how could a family raise enough for food and clothing and rent from such miserable holdings? No, they live by migration and emigration. The farms, if you may call them such, average four acres, and the rents \$15. Set aside the rent altogether, give them this land absolutely rent free, and it is the solemn truth that they could not raise enough food to keep them from starving. Every year the men and boys and

girls, the strongest in each family, go to England and Scotland and work as farm hands. They are able to send home a few shillings at a time, and return in the early winter with the rest of their savings. Most of them cannot pull through the hard season even by this cruel sacrifice, but have to depend upon money sent to them by the faithful, loving sons and daughters who have gone to America."

The car was stopped on the brow of a hill, and Father O'Hara swept his hand over the little valley that lay before us.

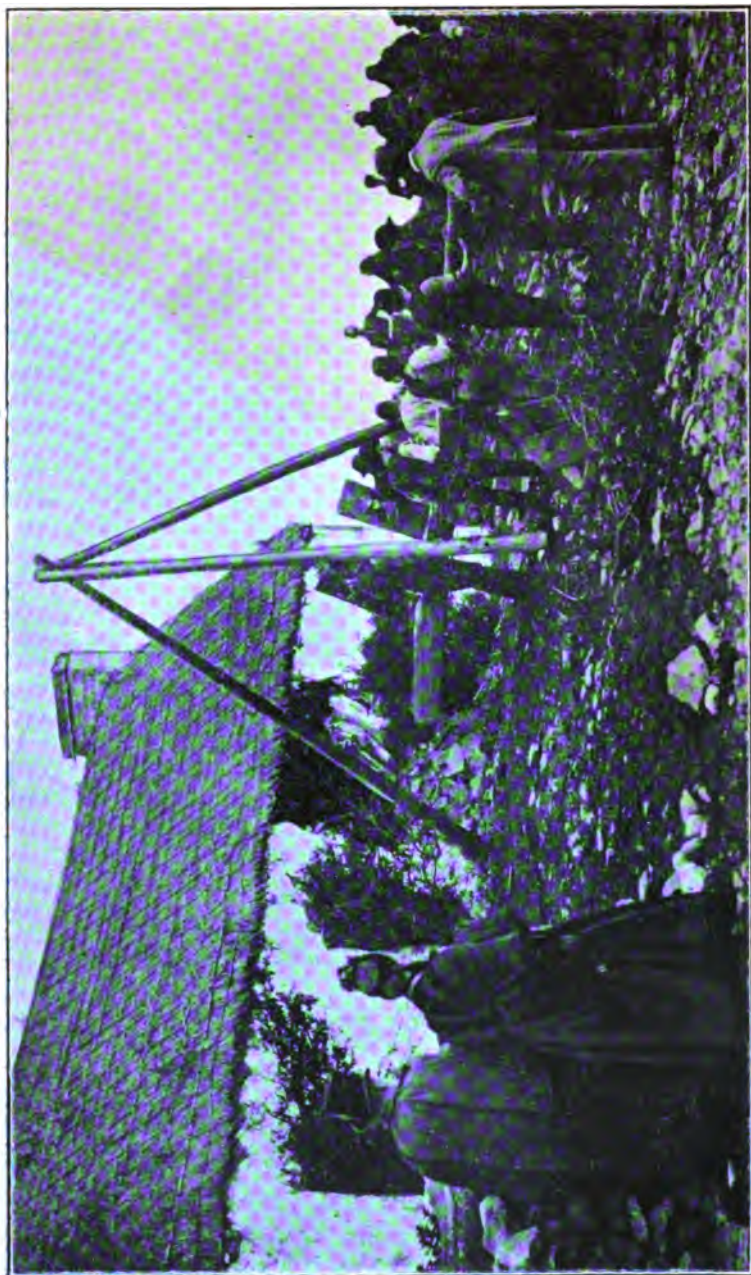
"There is the land," he said simply. Down below was the silent, desolate bog, useless for any cultivation worthy of the name, but filled with the precious peat, which seems to be the only gift of Providence to the unhappy people. On the slopes of the hills were the farms, tiny patches criss-crossed with the interminable walls of loose stones, and here and there a little whitewashed dwelling, with thatched roof, blackened by smoke and weather, and a rude cowshed against it, the very door of the house half hidden by accumulated piles of stable refuse.

"What an immense amount of labor has been wasted on these stone walls!" I suggested.

"Wasted?" echoed Father O'Hara, with a grim laugh. "Every stone in those walls was picked by hand from the ground. The plots they inclose were once nearly covered with the stones. An English journalist came here not long ago and wrote his impressions for a great London paper, a paper which has little sympathy for the Irish. I showed him these lands. Do you know what he wrote for Englishmen to read? This:

"When a man begins to cultivate a patch in the Swinford district of County Mayo, the first three crops he gets consist of stones."

"It's true; it's bitterly true. Driven from the lands which they and their fathers had occupied, these people have been herded where they had to take the rocky soil and make their farms with their bare hands. The stones range in size from the size of your fist to that half-ton boulder in the corner of the field yonder, which had to be pried loose with a crowbar and hauled out with ropes. Three crops of stones



BATTERING A BREACH IN THE WALL.



—that is what the settlers here have to face. And even with their utmost endeavor, after years of the most heartbreaking toil, the result is hardly better. The land cannot feed them.”

So these folk have to make the land with their hands before they can till it. And the walls are built because there is nowhere else to put the stones. One man, I noticed, had erected a four-foot wall around his half-acre patch. That was not enough, so he heaped up other tons and tons into a great mound over in one corner. He had buried his strength, perhaps his life, beneath that monstrous hill of labor. But what a monument it was to the manhood which would not be crushed!

A mile or two farther on we got down from the car and climbed a lane running up a hillside. That path was like the dry bed of a mountain stream. It was the land as it was uncleared of stones. At the summit a half dozen sickly trees stood bent to the wind amid a cluster of thatched hovels. I had thought it was a collection of cattle sheds. But it was a village. Or rather, it was both. Scattered along the brow of the hill were twenty or thirty of these wretched buildings, whitewashed, thatched, with less than one window apiece—the customary dwellings of the poorest peasants. There were no streets, for the houses—let us call them such—were set down in confusion. Where streets might have been there were rank pools of water where geese nuzzled in the slime, and paths of half-frozen mud and filth that wound around and through and over heaped-up piles of manure. The rough bricks of peat, gathered for the winter's fuel, lay in pyramid piles against the house walls.

The abject hideousness of the place got on my nerves as I splashed through the mud after the priest. The gray clouds had sunk closer to the desolate land and a searching rain was driven by the biting wind. I thought of the Polish mining settlements I have seen in Pennsylvania. The pictures I called up only made this scene more miserable. “Come,” said the priest. We had to stoop to enter a doorway and then had to stand aside to admit a little of the gray light. I could see nothing at first, but there was life somewhere in the darkness.

"Good day to you, Father." It was a woman's voice, and she came forward toward the patch of dim light at the door. An old woman, bent and wrinkled. Her feet were bare on the earthen floor and purple with the bitter cold.

"Well, now, Ellen, and how are you?"

"Badly, Father."

"And this is Kate, eh?" Somewhere from the darkness appeared a girl with brown hair and blue eyes. Her thin dress fluttered in the wind that whistled in at the open door. Her feet and legs were naked to the knees, but she did not shiver. Her face turned as red as her rough hands as she whispered a greeting to the priest and hung her head.

"Eh, what a fine girl we're getting to be! Have you been down to the convent school? What? 'No, Father.' And why not? Speak up, child. What do you say? Well—of course. But we'll try to get some clothes for you. Sure, you must go to school. You'll learn to read and write—and you should see the lace the other girls are making yonder."

"Look about you," whispered the priest to me.

Gradually the vision penetrated the gloom, and I could see through the whole—house. It was one room, perhaps eighteen feet by twelve. At one end was the chimney, with the open hearth on the floor, where a few blocks of turf smoldered. In one corner were a rude bench and table. In another a raised structure which I could not name. It seemed to be heaped with straw and rags—

"The bed," whispered the priest.

In the center the smoke-blackened thatch hung seven or eight feet clear of the floor. Where it rested on the walls it was less than five feet clear. I glanced around toward that part of the room to which my back had been turned. I had thought I heard some one moving. The gloom was more dense there. But I could see a heap of straw on the floor, and it moved, with grunts. A pig wallowed beside a trough. This was ten feet from the bed. Just beyond was a partition which did not reach to the roof. I stepped over and glanced within. It was a cow stalled, with a doorway leading outward to a pile of stable refuse. The cow was fifteen feet from the bed.

"And where is the man, Ellen, and your sons?"

"In England, Father. They're still working there."

"Ah, well, they'll be home soon, I suppose, for the winter?"

"They will, Father. Thank God."

I went outside, leaving the woman thanking God.

We went to other houses. Some were a little better. Some, believe me, were worse. One other I will speak of, because the inmates were the same, a mother and a young daughter. The priest spoke to them heartily.

"Come, now," he said, "what have we had for dinner to-day?" The woman pointed to a tin dish containing the remnants of a few little potatoes. "And the half of a ha'p'ny herring," she added, without the slightest emotion.

"For the two of you?"

"Ay, Father."

"And what's for supper, come now?" The woman threw her hand again at the little mess of cold potatoes in the tin dish. I saw a dark fragment of something in it.

"Yes, that, too. That's the other half of the herring," said the woman, simply. As we went away I found myself trying to divide one cent's worth of fish among two persons for two meals. There's a problem in fractions, with only one answer—hunger. We stumbled down the rocky lane again—it was after three o'clock in the afternoon and nearly dark—and drove on with the car. We visited other settlements—Cleragh, Carrick, Culthasney, and some which I cannot recall—but the tale was only retold. I have described, I confess, such scenes as were nearly the worst. But seldom did I see a place which in America or England would be considered a fit habitation for human beings. If all the lands and villages through which I passed, buildings and all, were offered to a Pennsylvania farmer in exchange for ten acres of his worst land he would laugh the gift to scorn. Yet each little patch of stony ground, with its wretched cabin, built by the hands of the tenants, costs them from \$15 to \$20 a year. And they have to go away to earn that. Meanwhile, there are families in England whose rent-rolls—than which there can be no better badge of respectability—are swelled by these very payments.



It will be the easiest thing in the world for the reader to say that the wretchedness I have touched upon is due to laziness or ignorance or lack of ordinary thrift. But that would be both false and foolish. I repeat, at the risk of wearying insistence, that these people live on the stony, barren land because there is nowhere else for them to live. They, or their fathers, reclaimed land at the cost of years of labor and builded them homes upon it. Then, by the simple operation of remorseless statutes, they were turned out, their houses taken from them, the work of their hands seized by their masters, the landlords. Therefore they are where they are.

But why the wretched homes? Why the housing of human beings and animals together? Such things have followed inevitably. The land defeating their best efforts to make it produce enough food, ground down by the bitterest poverty, they have found it physically impossible to raise themselves. Any other race would have sunk into unimagined depths of degradation. These Irish peasants are still healthy, moral, hopeful human beings. They need but a touch of human help to become sturdily prosperous. I know this, for I have seen it. Father O'Hara, as I have not stated before, is a member of the Congested Districts Board, that powerful agency of amelioration, which is headed by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. As we drove along he showed me some things that have been done.

"As you know," he said, "in some districts we have been able to acquire good lands and sell it in homesteads to the tenants who have been occupying barren lands. In this immediate vicinity, unfortunately, there is none available. The only remedy is to transfer some of the population into better neighborhoods. But meanwhile we have done much to raise the people up, to encourage them. We help to drain farms that need it, and reward those who help themselves. There is one of our houses yonder."

He pointed out a neat farmhouse of stone, with small glass windows, a stone chimney and a slate roof.

"That family," he said, "formerly lived in such a hovel as those you have seen to-day. We were able to add a little land to the patch they had. Then we built the house.

The family pay less now than they did for rent to the landlord, yet in time they will own house and ground. The board bought the property, and is selling it on yearly payments. Of course, this work is slow, and it is restricted to the few districts where we have been able to acquire the land. It will never become wholly effective until the purchase of all landlords' holdings is accomplished."

We visited several of the homes where the work of encouragement showed its effects. In one I found a house with four rooms, comfortably furnished. The living-room floor was of stone, well scrubbed. There was a dresser, filled with dishes. The dooryard was clean swept.

"Until we came to their assistance," said Father O'Hara, as we left the place, "this family lived in what is now the stable. The cow and pig had part of the same building, and the refuse was simply flung out of the door until it piled up so that one entering had to walk around it. The board adopted a plan of offering money to thrifty men who would agree to improve their holdings. We gave that man \$50. He did \$200 worth of work—and the result you see."

The country is in the Swinford district. The population is 44,162. The annual ratable valuation is \$4.54 for each person. Of the 7700 holdings of land, 4768 are worth less than \$20 and 7095 in all less than \$40. The latter valuation, it is agreed, represents an amount under which subsistence is impossible. There are, therefore, in this little district 35,000 persons who are confined to patches of land which cannot support life in them. At the same time, thirty-nine grazers and fourteen landlords occupy land valued at \$19,210 a year—as much, in proportion, as 4200 tenants, at the average valuation.

Of the 164,589 persons who emigrated from County Mayo in the fifty years following 1851, Swinford district lost more than 40,000. And the drain goes on. In 1881 the population was 53,714. In 1901 it was 44,162, a loss of 18 per cent. in twenty years.

After all, is there any wonder that statesmen have been laboring with this Irish question for thirty years?

## VII

### A MAN WHO KNOWS

It seems to me that I should not leave the story of Kiltimagh without some word of Father Denis O'Hara, himself and his work. He is a man to study. With the ability of a statesman and the intellect of a scholar, he is content to be a parish priest in a patch of populous desolation. In his devotion to painful good works he may be taken as typical of the rural clergy in this country. For his peculiar gifts and opportunities as a public administrator he commands more than desultory attention.

It was with a heart aching for the miseries I had seen that I sat down in the homely little study of the priest, while he devoted a necessary hour to those who had been waiting patiently to see him. It was a quaint, quiet little room. Though the hour was less than five o'clock, the winter night had already fallen, and the walls were lighted only by the wavering flames of the turf fire. The furniture was austere plain and worn with long use. There was a small writing desk, covered with a confusion of papers. The roomy old bookcase was filled with much-handled volumes—works of devotion, poetry, history, philosophy, in English, Irish and Latin. A man of the highest scholarship, with talents which might have won him ease, he had spent fifteen years in this wilderness of poverty, ministering to the helpless. I need not say that such devotion and sacrifice are not peculiar to followers of this man's religion, for in every country there are thousands of ministers who count the world well lost if they may serve humbly and with little material reward. I write of Father O'Hara as an example of them all.

I thought of him as he appeared while we passed through the crowded village fair and along the country lanes and into the houses of the poor. I began to realize then what power lies in the hands of the parish priest. He has grown

so into the lives of the people that he is a part of their very existence. They look to him not only as a spiritual authority, but as a friend, a counselor, a judge, an advocate, a father, indeed. He is more mighty to prevail with them than the imperial government, yet finds time to act as arbiter in neighbors' disputes, and from his decision there is no thought of appeal. By tradition and practice the people of his parish have delegated to him the powers of king and court, and he distributes justice in matters large and small with an open hand. I thought of him then as I saw him among the people. In the crowded fair and along the country roads every man and boy touched his hat as the priest passed. The women and girls bent their knees. Not one who met his eye failed of a word of greeting.

"Good day to you, Martin. How is the wife? That's well. A fine evening, Pat. \* \* \* Dan, my boy, a word with you. Keep clear of the public house to-night. It's no place for you. \* \* \* Ah, Mary, I'm glad to see you out again. Where are the girls? They're well? I'm glad of that, now."

There were perhaps five hundred men and women and children in the village street, and they had come from miles around to the fair. I think Father O'Hara spoke to fifty of them by name. He could have so called each one. There are 4500 persons in his parish, and he knows them all as a man knows his neighbors. Far out on a lonely road, miles from Kiltimagh, we were jogging along on our jaunting car. Coming toward us up a steep hill I saw an old, old woman. Under her rough, short skirt I could see her feet, bare on the icy ground. She was bent almost double, for on her back was tied a huge basket filled with half-frozen blocks of turf from the bog. It must have weighed nearly forty pounds. Slowly, painfully she toiled up the hill. At first she saw only the stranger on the car, but as she passed she nodded gravely. Then the priest cried out a cheery greeting, calling her by name. Instantly her face broke into smiles, and as the car stopped a moment she looked up into the kindly face above her with a gaze that was almost worship. A few cheerful words, and we passed on. I looked back at the old woman. She was plodding on up the hill.

But her step was freer, and I think the heavy burden on her back had grown lighter.

Across his hospitable dinner table Father O'Hara and I talked long of what we had seen that day and what we had not seen. It was all the cruel story of the land. Kiltimagh is in the Swinford union, or district, concerning which I have already given some figures. To get nearer home, there are in Kiltimagh electoral division 309 occupiers of land, whose holdings are valued at less than \$40 a year—that is, there are 309 families confined on land which cannot possibly yield enough food to keep them alive, let alone pay the rent of \$5 or more per acre. And in the adjoining division of Ballinamore lands worth \$3725 a year are occupied for pasturing cattle by one grazer and one landlord. Father O'Hara, who has been a leader in the fight for justice since the Land League agitation of 1879, knows the story as he knows his breviary.

"You have seen some of the results of the inequitable land system to-day," he said, "and the cause is plain. I'll give you an example. Comprising parts of this and other unions there is a great property called the Dillon estate, owned until a few years ago by Lord Dillon and before him by his ancestors. There are 93,000 acres in this one estate. Now listen. Arthur Young, the famous English traveler and writer, visited this district one hundred years ago. He described the Dillon property, and said the annual rental derived by the owner was \$25,000. Mark you, now. Lord Dillon never visited his estate. He never turned his hand to improve it. He never erected a farm building or built a fence or dug a drain. He simply lived in England, while his agents and bailiffs collected the rents from the tenants here. And in 1879 the rent-roll amounted to \$130,000 a year. In eighty years the income of the landlord had increased to five times the original amount.

"He had done absolutely nothing. The tenants had done everything. And as fast as they drained and reclaimed the land and built houses and fences, just as fast was the rent raised on them. They made the improvements and paid for them; and when at any time, whether through crop failure or sickness or sheer inability to pay, the tenants could



A REMNANT OF LANDLORDISM.



VILLAGE OF LOUGH GLYNN.



not meet the demands of the agents, they were evicted, other tenants replaced them at increased rents, and the profit of all their labor was seized by the landlord. It was by this system that the people have gradually been forced to take the miserable patches you saw to-day, while within a short distance there are thousands of acres of good land devoted to cattle grazing.

"I have mentioned the Dillon estate because it serves as an example of what can be done. The Congested Districts Board was able to arrange the purchase of this great tract in March, 1899. The price paid was \$1,450,000. We have spent more than \$100,000 for drainage, fencing, road-making, the improvement of houses and outbuildings, and will spend \$40,000 more. What is the result? The land has gone back to the people. The thousands of tenants and their families are gradually being made owners of the farms they work. Hovels are disappearing, and stone houses with slate roofs are taking their place. The annual payments of the tenants amount to only two-thirds of what they paid for rent, yet in a term of years they will own the land absolutely.

"You understand, of course, that this land was not bought by the government and presented to the people. They must pay for every acre of it. But the payments are so arranged as not to be burdensome, and before each thrifty tenant there is something to work for, the certainty that he or his children will eventually own his own little farm. The difference between that estate and those adjoining, which are still held by landlords, tells the whole story. A member of Parliament went among the Dillon estate tenants recently and asked them how they were doing.

" 'Why, bless you, sir,' said one farmer, 'we're as happy as a choir of angels.'

"And on the next adjoining estate you will find scores of holdings from which the unfortunate tenants have been evicted within the last six months; you will find those who remain paying 50 per cent. more for rent than these pay for purchase; and you will find those estates the very hotbed of agitation, with the police exercising the oppressive coercion laws to the extreme limit of severity.



"This contrast is inevitable. It cannot be expected that tenants who see their neighbors treated with justice and humanity, while they themselves are still ground down and oppressed, will not be discontented. In this immediate vicinity, as I have said, there is no good land available. The Congested Districts Board is devoting its energies to enlarging the small holdings where possible, assisting the most deserving tenants and encouraging improvement. But the only remedy for the whole intolerable system is the abolition of dual ownership of the land. Landlordism, as Ireland knows it, is an anachronism. The people who occupy the land, and farm it, and improve it, must be made the owners of it."

"How about the political agency which is working for this reform?" I asked. "Are you in favor of the United Irish League?"

"In favor of it?" cried Father O'Hara. "My dear man, I am heart and soul with it, and so is every good priest in Ireland, from the highest to the lowest. I tell my people so, too. I say to them: 'The United Irish League is fighting for you. You must fight with it. The best way for you to fight is to give money, and you ought to do it because every one of you will benefit by its work. Before you pay your rent, before you buy your clothes, before you pay your priest, give your shilling to the United Irish League.'"

Besides the devotion of the people, Father O'Hara has erected other monuments here. There is a great church, fit to grace any square in America, and a convent school, built of stone and heated with steam. This in a district where poverty is as inevitable as rent.

"I have to thank America for these," he said. "The church cost \$25,000 and the school half as much more, and most of it came from your country. Hundreds of young men and young women had to emigrate to America from here. I don't believe there are a score of families in the parish that have not relatives on the other side. I started that church with two half sovereigns. When I wrote over to our boys and girls in America the money poured in. Ah, they don't forget the old home, poor as it is."

We went through the convent school during the day.

Classes of girls from ten to sixteen years old were busily at work, under the tuition of black-robed Sisters. Here, as in the streets, Father O'Hara called each child by name, and had a word of advice, or, more frequently, a joke, for each one of them. The girls receive an elementary education and are instructed in household work and lace-making. The Sisters also visit the houses in the parish, tend the sick and encourage the mothers and daughters to keep their houses neat.

"We teach housework and cooking," said Father O'Hara, "because it helps to raise the poor folks a little and also because many of the girls will emigrate, and we do not want them to arrive in their new homes ignorant."

So there are housewives in America who have cause for thankfulness to Father O'Hara. I remarked to him that the Sisters seemed very bright and cheerful, that they lacked the solemn austerity associated with some religious orders.

"They're good women," he said, smiling. "I've talked to them. I've told them that prayers and fasting are excellent things, and I hoped they would practice them. But I told them that working for the poor and unfortunate was the best form of prayer I knew."

This is the Rev. Denis O'Hara, parish priest. It seems to me that the "P. P." which he writes after his name is as noble distinction as any string of letters to be found in the peerage. It is the Distinguished Service Order of humanity.

## VIII

### \* THE HUMAN SIDE

From the top of a fairy mound, where the elves dance of a summer's night, I have seen the Problem of the Land as in a picture ten miles wide. And from a seat on Pat Tuohy's jaunting car, from hazy noon to frosted silver evening, I have seen the panorama of the tragic earth unroll for thirty Irish miles. That's a day's work. What a picture it was! I thought of the vales of Pennsylvania and the velvet fields of our middle West. Here they were over again, mile on mile of the fairest land the mind can conceive, rich with promise of fertility, green still to the very verge of winter, smiling, beautiful—and empty. That is the tragedy of it. I had spent weary days and nights in places where humanity is wretchedness incarnate and men and women huddle crowded amid grim barrenness. There are ranges here where the wind may sweep for leagues over living fields and never know the taint of the turf smoke. The crows that wheel black against the sky must mount far to spy out a chimney or a hayrick. The hares that run wild know no strangers but the rough-coated cattle that graze in scattered herds. It is fertility and loneliness; the land that mourns for the people as they mourn for the land.

"Come," said John Fitzgibbon, "come, and I'll show you what we fight for and why."

It was Sunday in Castlerea, and the shuttered street lay silent and empty, the folk having gone from church to dinner. The sun at its highest point hung as though setting and the street was in wintry shadow. We climbed on the jaunting car, wrapping the rugs well, for the wind was keen and piercing, and clattered out on the road to the eastward. At the first corner stood a stalwart member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, in his boots and cloak and peaked cap.

\*Chapters VIII, IX, X and XI were written in Castlerea, County Roscommon, in December, 1902.

He glanced at us sharply, then disappeared, with ostentatious indifference.

I shall have a good deal to say of John Fitzgibbon, for he is a man to write about. But for the present we shall just glance at him, as he balances himself on the swaying car. A stout man, with a rugged, burly figure; a round, healthy, keen, kindly, red face; a close-trimmed beard of gray-streaked copper, and blue eyes that twinkle or grow hard as he talks. For the rest, he is a man of the people, chairman of the Roscommon County Council, an enthusiastic official of the United Irish League, a speaker of natural force, a devout Christian, a total abstainer and a zealot for temperance. Add to this that he is a prosperous and respected merchant and has served four terms in prison for his political views, and you have a rough sketch of one of the finest Irishmen I have ever met.

For half a mile or so we skirted the Sandford demesne, where great trees stand thick behind the time-blackened wall, then swung into the country road, with its border of leafless hawthorn hedge. When we were quite clear of the village I turned and looked behind, for I knew what to expect. Two hundred yards back was a man on a bicycle; a trim-built man in a dark uniform, with peaked cap. The present government does not approve of explorations by American newspaper men, particularly under the guidance of such dangerous criminals as John Fitzgibbon. Hence the presence of the R. I. C. man, detailed to follow us though we traveled till another dawn.

"There he is," I said. John Fitzgibbon glanced back.

"Oho!" he said. "'Tis Reilly, the brave lad. Well, he has a ride before him."

"Bad luck to him," said Pat Tuohy to his pipe.

"I am quite interested in Reilly," said Mr. Fitzgibbon. "He tried his level worst to send me to jail for six months a while back—hard labor, too, on the stone pile. He's one of the most promising members of the force hereabouts, and some day he'll be an inspector, I doubt not. He's devoted to his duty, as you see, and I don't know his equal for giving the testimony that's wanted. It was my privilege to prove him a liar in open court on the occasion I'm speaking of,

whereby I'm taking this ride with you instead of swinging a sledge in Castlebar jail."

All this was said quite pleasantly. There was no visible rancor about it, but I began to appreciate the cold enmity that exists between the people and the government police who harass them.

A few miles out the car stopped at the foot of a lane and we walked to the top of a hill, then climbed a low stone wall. Before us was a circular mound of green, a hundred feet in diameter at the base, perhaps, and forty or fifty feet high. We climbed up. The top was perfectly round, thirty feet across, with a depression which made the outer edge a ridge. The thing was puzzling.

"This is a fairy mound," laughed Mr. Fitzgibbon. I suggested an ancient burial place, with unimagined treasures of the bronze age concealed in it.

"Tut, man," he said, "there isn't a native in the country would drive a pick into the turf of Mullaghduhy hill, so whatever is inside will stay there. It was built by fairies, you know. Well, personally, I think it was a sort of watch tower in the old days, or perhaps a cannon was mounted here. Look what a range it had."

Around and below us, on every side, lay the country, flooded with the pale light of the winter sun. The view embraced eight or ten miles in all directions, a rolling green plain fading away into grassy hills. Here and there were small clumps or rows of trees. Low stone walls followed the contour of the land, making big and little fields of irregular shape. The dark streaks were ditches, the winding thread of silver a little stream. I counted ten houses within vision on that great stretch. Each had two or three acres of tilled ground. The rest was grass. The only living things in sight were tiny scattered flocks of sheep and cattle. Mr. Fitzgibbon translated.

"We are overlooking several estates," he said; "Balf, Irwin, Sandford, Murphy—corners of all of them are in sight. Oh, yes, there were farms here once, hundreds of them. But all the people were evicted. They emigrated to America, or moved, or died. The dozen or so farms you see are held by men having long leases. They're all happy and

prosperous, though the rents are very high. The others—there was no help for them.”

“Why were they evicted? Wouldn’t they pay rent?”

“Most of them couldn’t. The great ‘clearing out’ started at the time of the famine, fifty years ago. The people couldn’t get food to eat, let alone money for the landlords. Then the world demanded cattle, and the landlords decided to turn these fertile lands into grazing ranches. That doomed those who had fought their way through the famine. So they all went. But come; we’ve just started.”

Our course lay off to the southward, over low, rolling hills and long meadows. The road was hard with frost and rang to the horse’s hoofs. The surrounding scene was still the same—beyond the low stone walls lay endless green fields, with not a sign of farm or crops. Every few miles a little thatched house stood by the roadside, with a tiny patch of vegetable garden and a cluster of hayricks, brown in the sun. These were the huts of the herders. Each man has 250 to 300 acres under his care.

“That’s it,” said Mr. Fitzgibbon; “the best land in Roscommon, fit to support thousands. And on land where ten families might live in decent comfort the only occupants are a man and a dog. A man and a dog. Not a crop on twenty miles of it, and the people wanting for food over yonder.”

As we rounded the top of a hill a glimpse of historic Ireland broke the monotony of the depopulated land. Between us and the low-hanging sun was a ruin, a great quadrangle of thick stone walls, with the remnants of a high tower at each corner. On the south front, covered with drapery of green ivy, the wall was less eaten by age than the rest.

“Ballintober Castle,” said Mr. Fitzgibbon. “The castle of the O’Connors, Kings of Connaught.”

Grim, silent, deserted, this pile of blackened stones overlooking the fertile, empty land seemed pathetically out of place. It should have crumbled to dust and disappeared with the fighting chieftains who ruled the Ireland of the Irish. The property, by the way, is still in the royal family. It is owned by The O’Conor Don, a famous member of the older generation of to-day. A year or two ago he gave a picnic

in the ruins to the Irish Historic Society—chicken sandwiches and champagne in the quadrangle where the men at arms once cheered their mailed leaders.

Still the miles were reeled off, and we saw nothing but green fields on every side, with houses just often enough to emphasize the loneliness. One hovel was such a wretched looking place that we stopped. The walls gaped with fissures and the thatch of the roof was falling in. I thought it must be untenanted, but a woman came to the door. She was a weird-looking creature, with gray hair that hung in ragged strips over her head and face. Her feet were bare. Mr. Fitzgibbon spoke to her. She answered sullenly.

"Who lives here?"

"I do. Meself."

"What rent do you pay?"

"I don't know. My brother pays it."

"How much land have you?"

"Divil a perch."

Then she turned and went back into the hut.

As we drove along I had noticed a peculiar formation in the ground here and there. Across the fields lay low, green ridges, sometimes two or three hundred yards long. In some places they looked like lines of grass. In others they melted into the level ground. I asked what they were.

"The remains of walls and ditches of the old farms," answered Mr. Fitzgibbon. "You'll find them all over these lands. When the tenants were evicted the walls were thrown down, and grass grew over the places. You will see here and there a clump or row of trees. They mark where the farmhouses used to stand. The houses were leveled and the walls that border the road we are on were built of stones that once sheltered the evicted tenants."

It was ghastly. I began to see the marks of devastation everywhere. The fields on every side were scarred with the green ridges, as though the whip of oppression had left great welts on the surface of the land. In two or three places we came upon the crumbling ruins of houses, which for some reason had not been carried away. There was one of which the four walls still stood, with the chimney, though the roof had disappeared years ago. We could still trace the



PAT TUOHY AND HIS JAUNTING CAR.



BETTER THAN THE OLD STYLE.





outlines of the little garden and the remnants of a stable. A hare scampered away as I peered through a gaping hole where there had been a window.

"The family that lived there had fifty acres of good land," said Mr. Fitzgibbon. "They were evicted because the landlord wanted the land to add to his grazing ranch. All of them went to America."

Twelve miles southeast of Castlereagh we crossed the railroad and entered an avenue of great trees. Half way up the avenue we met a party of men in knickerbockers and women in furs. They were members of a shooting party occupying Donamon Castle, which we saw further on, a fine, old, gray building, with a view of miles of green country.

"This is a fair example of absentee landlordism," said Mr. Fitzgibbon. "This is the estate of Sir George Caulfield; 11,000 acres, rent-roll about \$40,000 a year. The good land is let to big grazers; the poor land to small tenants. The owners have not lived here for sixty years. The castle and woods are let to shooting parties during the season."

We passed Kilbegnet, turned north, skirted the tiny hamlet of Crosswell and so reached the place called Glinsk. Here there was another relic of Irish Ireland. On the side of the hill was the gray ruin of a big house, known, of course, as "the castle." It had belonged to the Burkes, I was told, a fine old family of the country. There were about 10,000 acres. The Burkes were good landlords, but they became embarrassed financially at the time of the great famine, and the estate was sold to Pollock, "the arch evictor," and 1100 families were turned out of their homes. A few miles more of the empty ranches, then a few miles across bogs that seemed to stretch to the horizon. It was nearly five o'clock, and the sun had set long ago. A new moon made the road white, and showed the bog heather silvering with frost. Befriended by the darkness, Constable Reilly pedaled along close to the rear of the car, whistling softly to himself, for his ride was nearly over. So we passed through the quiet street of Ballymoe and on to Castlereagh. At Mr. Fitzgibbon's door we climbed down, stiff and cold.

"I have seen where the people used to be," I said, "but where are they now—those who did not emigrate or die?"

"Come with me to-morrow, sir, and I'll show you," said Pat Tuohy, and I said I would.

We started on a bright morning and went north and northwest from Castlereagh; in the opposite direction, that is, from where lay the rich grazing ranches. We had not gone many miles before the difference in the country became marked. The green fields disappeared, and as the road wound along a slight ridge there lay miles of unkind-looking land on either side of us, with wide stretches of brown bog. And here, where everything conspired to cheat husbandry and make life hard, I found the people. Their cabins were on every side; where stones were sown thick in the soil, and down in the lowlands where the morasses lay. The houses were pitifully mean, the tilled patches pitifully small. The poverty was glaring.

In course of time we came to a place called Feigh. There are some to whom it bears the sacred name of home, therefore I shall not say how altogether wretched it was. It comprised a cluster of hovels on the ridge road, with hill slopes of stony ground and hollows of bog and swamp. The bailiffs had been there before me. In half a dozen of the poor houses I saw the "emergency men" who are placed in charge after evictions. Each place was guarded by four or five policemen. Most of the unhappy people had disappeared, but I found one of them, a stalwart man, still young, who came swinging along the road with a big creel full of turf strapped to his back.

"You talk to him, sir," said Pat Tuohy. "He'll tell ye. Ay, sir, he'll tell ye."

His name was Bernard King, and he was thirty-six years old. The day was cold, so we walked up and down the road together as he told me the story of an evicted tenant. It seemed a fearful tale to me, as he told it, perhaps because I could see all around me the desolate homes.

"There was thirty-one acres of land, sir," he began. "It belonged to my father before me, and to his mother before him."

"You owned it, then?"

"Oh, no, sir. 'Twas this way: My grandmother, rest her soul, got the land seventy-odd years ago. 'Twas in the family a long time, you see. She went to London and worked for seven years, until she got a little money put by, enough to get a farm near her old home. Then she came back here and rented the thirty-one acres from Lord de Freyne. She paid a big fine to get possession of the land, and a big rent besides—£8 a year.

"It was hard work, I've heard tell, makin' that land raise a crop. It needed drains, d'ye see, and only the landlord could build the drain, because the land lay on the bottom of the valley, and the whole place had to be drained at once. But the landlord, of course, would have nothin' to do with it, barrin' collectin' his rents. But grandmother and her husband worked hard, and made shift to raise a kind of livin' out of the farm. They got through the famine, too. After that, they had improved the place so much that the rent was raised to £10 a year. By and by grandmother died and it came to my father. He did his best, but somehow he couldn't make it go. When he gave it to me, five years back, there was four years' rent due on it. But I got married and took hold of it. My wife had a bit of money, and she paid up every shillin' of the back rent. Still we couldn't raise enough crops to keep us goin'."

"Not on thirty-one acres? Where is the land?"

"Come with me, sir, and I'll show you."

We walked to the edge of the hill and the mar. pointed to a spot a quarter of a mile away, in the hollow. I said I could see only a sheet of water.

"Yes, sir," he said, simply, "that's it. Twenty-five acres of my land is under that water. It's flooded eight or nine months in the year. In the other three months I tried to raise a bit of hay, but the grass soured because of the water, and it wasn't good for the cattle."

Here was a case to make one think. This tenant paid a yearly rental for a piece of land. In theory this was for twelve months' use. In practice five-sixths of his land was under water for three-fourths of the year.

"So I couldn't pay the rent," said Bernard King.

"Would you like to come and see my wife, sir? She'd take it very kindly if you'd come."

I wondered where this evicted family was living. We walked up the road a few hundred yards and stopped in front of—a stable. There was no mistaking the place. The broken thatch had been repaired and new windows and doors put in, but this building had unmistakably been meant for cattle and had housed cattle. I went inside. It was ten feet by eighteen. In one corner was a bed made of rough planks. Against the wall was a dresser, holding rough dishes. Two chairs, a table and a smolder of turf in the chimney—that was all. Mrs. King came forward, smiling bravely, a wee baby in her arms. But when her husband said I was from America she broke down and cried.

"America!" she said. "God bless you, sir, I lived there. Thirteen years I worked in New York and over in Jersey trying to get a bit of money so I could have a home in the old place. First I sent a lot to my own folks; then I saved up for myself. I brought back \$565."

"And then we got married," said her husband. "Four years ago it was. I had the farm and my wife had her fortune, and we thought sure we were fixed for life. You remember, sir, I told you there was four years' back rent due. My wife paid it."

"I did," she said. "Thirteen years I'd worked for that money and I paid it out in three. I paid Lord de Freyne's agent every shilling of the arrears. Sixty golden sovereigns, sir."

What is the use of saying that the poor woman might better have stayed in America? The most fanatical patriot who reads this cannot measure the passionate love these people bear to the soil of their race, cruel as they have found it. Not many come back, but this woman did, and to her there was nothing so blessed as the privilege of spending the savings of years to buy a farm near her old home. But her sacrifice and her husband's work alike were of no avail. The land simply could not be made to yield food and clothing for the family and rent for the landlord. Little by little the savings melted away—the "golden sovereigns" disappeared. The beginning of the end came last February, when a writ

of eviction was served on this family, with many others. They owed \$125 rent. While they struggled despairingly to raise some money the remorseless machinery of the law ground on slowly, and to the rent due was added \$200 in costs. This was quite hopeless. They gave up.

The eviction was on August 26 last. A scene familiar to the countryside. The bailiff and his men came, guarded by fifty or sixty policemen with rifles, for they knew there would be a crowd of tenants there. Amid this display of armed force the little household was cleared out. The wailing of women filled the street, for the horror of eviction smote every one of them. The poor furniture was carried out and flung on the ground and the little treasures of the household piled up for all the crowd to see. Who can measure the grief and shame that burdened this man and woman? It is the ruthless exposure of the home, the brutal turning out in the open of things sacred to the hearth, that seem so cruel. Yet it is all perfectly legal, and the most civilized nation on earth quite approves of it.

"And there we were on the roadside, sir," said the woman, "with not a roof to shelter us from the rain. The baby, poor dear, was two months old when he was evicted."

The little chap in her arms looked soberly at me, as unconscious as his mother was that her remark sounded so pitiful.

"But at least," I suggested, "the house was yours?"

"No, indeed, sir," said Bernard King; "that went with the rest. Sure 'twas not enough to satisfy the claim, because, you see, the costs were £40, near twice as much as the rent."

There was nothing more to be said. I summed up the case in my mind thus: Seventy years ago a woman, having worked in London for seven years, saved enough to pay the "fine," as it is called, for the privilege of taking a farm. She and her husband cleared the land, reclaimed it, built fences, a house and outbuildings. Her son and her grandson continued the work of improvement, and her grandson's wife spent \$500 in cash keeping the place up. But, leaving aside this expenditure of money, there was spent on the farm the heart-breaking labor of three generations.

And the result? For an unpaid claim of \$125 the whole

farm, buildings, improvements and all, was seized by the landlord. The third generation was left homeless, poorer than the brave grandmother when she emigrated to London seventy years ago. There may be proper comments upon this story. I shall not attempt any.

When the Kings were put on the roadside the neighbors took upon themselves their misery as part of the common burden. One man offered a cow stable for which he had no use, his cattle having been sold by the bailiffs to satisfy a rent claim. In this reeking place the father and mother and their two children took shelter. With the help of neighbors the filth was cleared out, the thatch repaired and the doors made tight against the cold weather. There the family are living to-day in a place where no self-respecting man in America would stable a horse he valued. This is the end of seventy years of work.

The principal object of this trip was to discover a contrast. In this neighborhood the great Dillon estate and the estates of Lord de Freyne and the Murphy family may be found side by side. The Dillon estate, it will be remembered, was purchased three years ago by the Congested Districts Board, and is now in slow process of resale to the tenants. These make small payments, and in time will own their homesteads. Their neighbors, under the Murphy and de Freyne regimes, pay fifty per cent. more for rent merely. On the Dillon estate the board is digging a drainage system, enlarging holdings and building comfortable houses. On the other lands nothing is done for the tenants. The result is not surprising. This district is the very hotbed of agitation. Those who are excluded from the benefits of ownership are fighting madly to raise themselves. There have been refusals to pay rent, consequent evictions, public meetings suppressed, speakers sent to prison. The whole countryside is in a ferment, which Dublin Castle, through the police, is trying to quell by attacking the few liberties the people have.

Lough Glynn was the largest settlement we reached. It consists of a row of houses set on either side of the turnpike. The best building is the little store and house of Patrick Webb, who is the district leader of the United Irish League. He has been in prison, of course. It is worth

while noting, by the way, that the leaders in this movement are always found among what we term the "solid" men of the community. Back of the village is the little lake which gives it its name, and on the north shore, seen from the village through the surrounding trees, stands Lough Glynn House, once the seat of Lord Dillon. I was curious to see the place.

We took the road around the western end of the lake, entered where the rusted gates still hung to the old stone pillars, and passed up a magnificent avenue of trees, through which we could see the lake, lying blue in the sun. This brought us to the rear of the house, among the long rows of stables and outbuildings. The caretaker was absent, and the place was quite silent. The air of desertion was oppressive. I walked around to the front of the house. The windows stared blankly across the lawn and shrubbery and down to the lake. This old gray house was a type of the passing regime. The owner, who never called it his home, is gone, and all the fair demesne has passed to the people who were his servants.

It did not take much imagination to people the house with a jolly party. Grooms lounged at the stables. The big front doors were open, and across the lawn came servants with tea for those who strolled under the trees. Laughter floated up from the lake, where boats glided over the smooth waters. Everything here was peace and plenty and pleasure. And outside the park gates the people toiled without reward and without hope. Now it is the house that is without hope, silent and deserted. Soon the woods where no peasant would have dared to set his foot will be leveled, and tidy farmhouses will be built where the game was pursued by indolent hunters. The people are coming back to their own.

Pat Tuohy and I traveled many miles that day. On the Dillon estate we saw where the Congested Districts Board had built fences and drains and made roads and erected houses. Often the old and new stood nearly side by side—the thatched hut already falling into decay and the slate-roofed house of stone speaking of decency and comfort. On our way back we struck again through the desolate scenes



of the unimproved estates, where the bleak, arid landscape is rendered all the more hideous by the wretched homes of the tenants. We went up nearly as far as Ballaghaderreen, then around by Frenchpark, the seat of Lord de Freyne, and so back to Castlerea by moonlight. I had seen more misery than I can ever describe, and much simple happiness where the people had had a chance to work for themselves. But one scene remained in my mind and one voice rang in my ears. As we left the sorry little home of Bernard King and his wife I put a piece of silver in the baby's hand. The mother tried to give it back, but her eyes filled with tears and she gave up.

"God bless you, sir," she whispered, brokenly, "and a happy, happy home to you!"

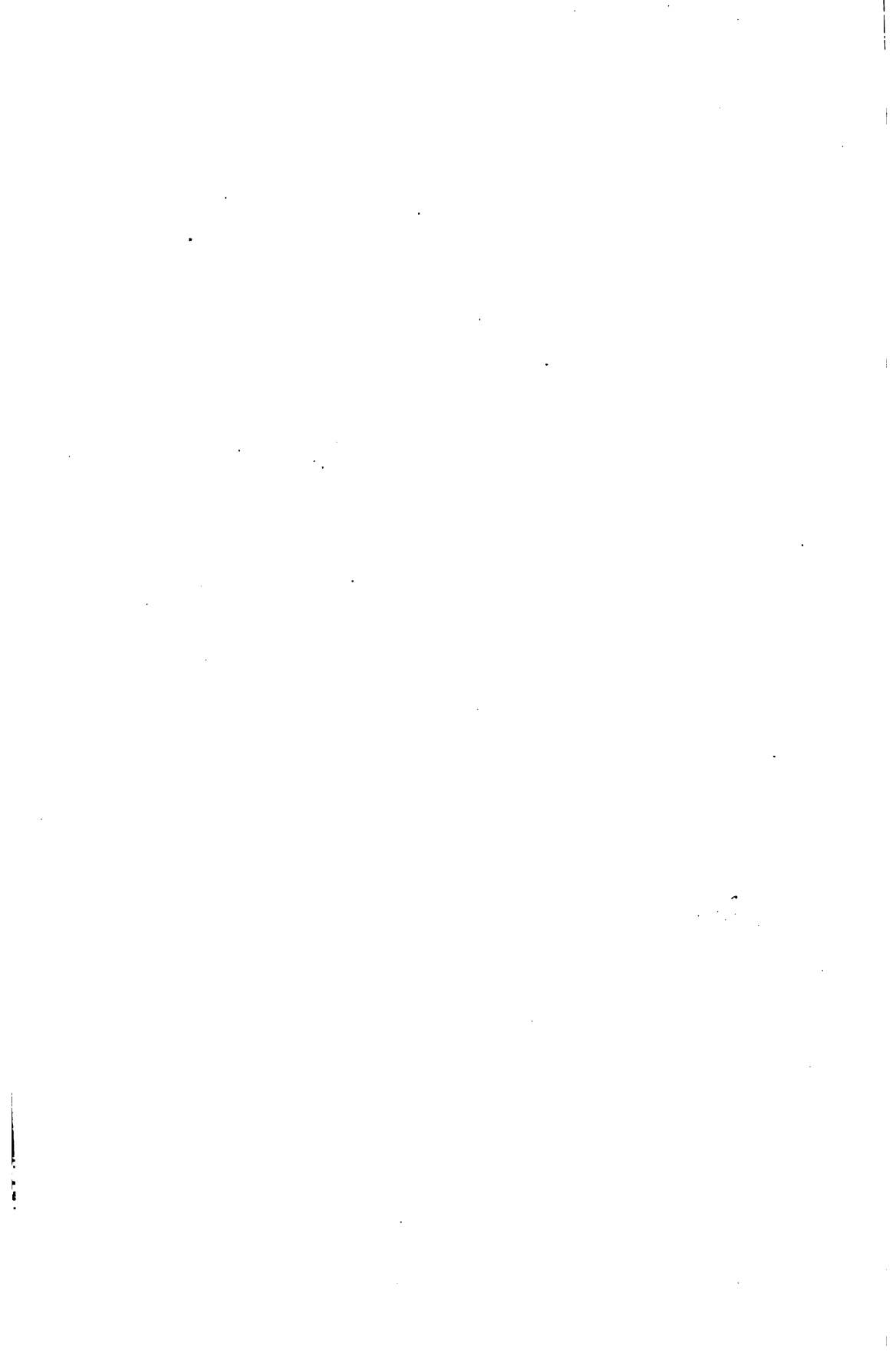
She had wished for me the supreme blessing which she had never known.



CONSTABULARY AT AN EVICTION.



BERNARD KING AND HIS STABLE HOME.



## IX

### SOME OF THE RECORD

With John Fitzgibbon I had traversed miles upon miles of fertile lands, where there are no inhabitants but a few cattle herders, and later I had visited the poverty-stricken settlements which have grown up in the bogs and on the rocky wastes. He explained the situation at length.

"In this district," he said, "it is not high rents that keep the people poor. Though the Land Commission were to give them their present farms free, they could not support themselves. The necessity is to let them have decent land, which by industry may be made to feed and clothe those who occupy it.

"You saw the thousands of acres of rich soil now used for cattle ranches, but still bearing the marks of destroyed homesteads. Away back in the thirties the landlords began to get rid of their tenants. The famine of '49 gave great impetus to the clearing out, and the enormous demand for cattle during the Crimean War was another thing that turned the landlords toward grazing as more profitable than tenant farming. A landlord, instead of having to collect rents from two hundred or three hundred tenants, found he could let the same land to half a dozen big grazers. This rid him of a lot of trouble and saved him the annoyance of constant agitation about excessive rents.

"So the people were driven out, those who could pay their rents with those who couldn't. But wasn't the landlord within his rights, you say? To be sure he was. But think of what those rights were under the iniquitous laws. By statute he was the owner not only of the land, but of every improvement which generations of tenants had made. His order to them to leave was a forfeiture of their property. The houses and barns they had built, where their fathers had lived and their children had been born, passed to the landlord absolutely, and there was no law under which the tenant

could recover a penny for the home stolen from him. A man's father and grandfather, perhaps, reclaimed the land fifty or sixty years before; drained it, fenced it, built house and barns. At the command of the landlord all the labor of those years was swept away.

"Those were terrible days, as my father has told me. The whole countryside was filled with sorrowing, homeless people. The blows of axe and crowbar were heard everywhere, and men and women wept to see their homes leveled by the destroyers. Houses, barns and walls were flung down, and the stones that had sheltered happy families were built into fences around the grazing fields. I'll give you an instance or two. There was a nobleman who owned 11,000 acres, on part of which were more than one hundred tenants with little farms. The nobleman was a generous man, and his tenants were better treated than others. But he spent all his time in England, and trusted to his agent to manage the estate. This agent determined to gather an estate for himself. So, during a time of agitation, he wrote to his employer letters warning him to remain away, as he would be assassinated if he came to his Irish property. Then the agent began to evict the tenants from the lands he coveted. Nearly a hundred of them were turned out on the roadside, their houses were torn down and the agent became the lessee of a fine property. His grandsons hold it to this day, and set up to be fine country gentlemen. The descendants of the evicted tenants are living over here in the bogs, or are in America.

"You heard me speak of Allen Pollock, known as the 'arch evictor.' He was a wealthy Scotch grazer, and when the government forced the sale of estates belonging to landlords who had become insolvent this Pollock bought great tracts. The sales were made through the Incumbered Estates Court, established in 1848, and authority was given to clear out the tenants. Pollock evicted 1100 families. No reason or excuse was necessary, beyond the fact that he wanted the lands. Men who had been born and raised on the little farms were put on the roadside. Many had struggled through the famine, only to be evicted at last, in spite of their ability to pay the rents. Pollock's idea was to

work his land as a series of great farms, under the care of stewards and laborers. But the scheme failed. In fifteen years a receiver was appointed and the land was divided up among half a dozen grazers. The cattle browse to-day where the homes of 5000 people once stood.

"In these terrible days the estates of Lord Dillon and Lord de Freyne became a refuge for evicted tenants. They took hundreds of holdings, only the worst land being obtainable by them, and there they began again the struggle for existence. You have seen to what misery they have descended. It is almost incredible the amount of labor that has been expended in trying to reclaim these worthless lands. In most places the soil is so light that the poor tenants had to spread gravel on it to give it weight. They dug the gravel from the beds and carried it in creels on their backs and spread it on the lands—sometimes as much as a hundred tons to the acre.

"Each landlord had a man in his employ called a land valuer. This man's duty was to inspect the holdings from time to time, estimate the improvements and raise the rents accordingly. Land which was rented at the beginning for three shillings an acre had to pay more each year as it was improved, until the price rose to twelve or fifteen shillings an acre. The rent of the Dillon estate rose from £5000 to £26,000 in eighty years. Every shilling of the increase was paid by the tenants in improvements they made by their own labor. The result was, of course, to discourage thrift. The man who tried to improve his condition paid dearly for it. The system put a premium on laziness and a penalty on industry. There were occasional outbursts of protest and violence; but for the most part the poor people were driven dumbly to their fate. No leader dared to rise up and champion them, for that meant imprisonment. It was not until the Land League agitation of 1879 swept over the country that effective defense was found. This outburst, with all the lawlessness it caused, resulted in the passage of the Land Act of 1881.

"Now for the present agitation. The Dillon and de Freyne estates, as you know, lie side by side. On the Dillon estate, which was bought by the Congested Districts Board

three years ago, the tenants are getting comfortable homes, their holdings are being enlarged and they pay one-third less per year as purchase money than their neighbors on private estates pay for rent. Naturally, the unfortunate ones grew bitterly discontented, and a year ago they determined to try to obtain better terms. A deputation, appointed at a meeting, went to call on Lord de Freyne with a request that he reduce their rents to the figure which their neighbors paid as purchase instalments. The gates of Frenchpark were shut against them. The landlord would not even receive their protest. The war was on. A meeting was held in the village of Frenchpark, where it was decided not to pay any more rent and to raise a defense fund. John Dillon was in Bal-laghaderreen at the time, and was asked to sanction the project; but as John Redmond was in America, he declined to encourage the movement at that period. But the tenants were determined, and when, ten days later, writs of eviction were served on the Murphy estate tenants, the struggle began. The same day a big meeting was held at Fairy-mount, which I attended. A proposition was made to create a defense fund by taxing each tenant one shilling in the pound on the valuation of his holding. With the idea of discouraging the movement, for I did not consider the time ripe for it, I declared the assessment would have to be at least five shillings in the pound. The tenants agreed promptly, and thereupon it became my duty to support the project heart and soul. I have done so."

"Wait a minute. As I understand it, the rents of these farms have been fixed by the Land Commission, at figures which are presumably just. The landlords had no part in fixing them. How do you justify the tenants in their refusal to pay?"

"First, because their neighbors paid one-third less for purchase; second, because the so-called judicial rents are outrageously excessive. The Commissioners know nothing whatever of land. The labor expended in reclaiming the farms during the last fifty years amounts to more than the true value. Evictions on the de Freyne estate began in July. The usual course is to sue for ejectment in the county courts, where the costs against the tenant are from \$10 to \$12.

Lord de Freyne choose to go to the Superior Court, though that process could give him possession only two weeks sooner. There the costs to the tenant averaged \$200, which, of course, made it quite impossible for the tenants to pay. The committee in charge defended the suits, but lost, and the tenants were turned out. Each family receives \$5 a week from the fund."

This seemed to me a costly war. A refusal to pay rents, consequent eviction by due process of law, and the support of evicted families out of a common fund.

"What good have you accomplished by this remarkable system?" I asked. John Fitzgibbon smote the table with his fist.

"It has brought you here," he said. "It has spread an agitation through Ireland which will not subside until the question is settled. It has focused the attention of the whole British people and their government upon the injustice that rules here. It has attracted the notice of the United States, and a great American newspaper sends a special correspondent here to describe conditions as they are. The cost is great, but we are satisfied with the results."



## X

### CONGESTION AND MIGRATION

All over Ireland the injustice of the land system is apparent, but it is in the West that the conditions have ground the people down into such misery that only revolutionary legislation can lift them up again. The present purpose is, therefore, to take a more general survey of the western problem. The government recognized its existence in 1891 by the establishment of the Congested Districts Board. A glance at the map will show how great was the need for measures of amelioration. The congested districts cover 3,500,000 acres, with a population of more than 500,000. Nearly seven-eighths of Donegal, three-fourths of Leitrim, a third of Sligo and Roscommon, the greater part of Mayo, half of Galway and Kerry and a fourth part of Cork—in these lands a half million souls are sunk in dire poverty. Those districts investigated personally by the writer lie in Roscommon, Mayo and Galway. The investigation might have been prolonged indefinitely. "You may go to five hundred places," I was told, "but you will find only the same story five hundred times repeated."

Under the act creating the Board, a "congested district" is one in which the average annual ratable valuation is less than \$7.50 for each person. The unit of congestion is the electoral division, of which there are 3652. In all, 429 divisions were scheduled as congested, and the population of these districts, estimated at more than half a million, came under the care of the Board.

How poor are these people? Some figures may illustrate the answer. The "poor law valuation" of the districts—that is, the yearly taxable value of all the property—is about \$5 for each individual. But this is a very vague statement, after all. I am able to present figures showing the actual condition of typical families, as discovered through investigation by the Department of Agriculture. The follow-

## CONGESTION AND MIGRATION

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ing table shows the receipts and expenditures for a year of a family of five persons "in ordinary circumstances":

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURES.	
Sale of bullock.....	\$22.50	Rent .....	\$10.00
" " 5 sheep.....	18.75	Taxes .....	1.41
" " pig .....	17.50	Tea .....	29.25
" " eggs .....	11.08	Sugar .....	9.75
" " homespun .....	17.50	Meal .....	38.50
" " corn .....	3.75	Flour .....	9.37
" " fish .....	40.00	Clothing .....	32.12
" " knitting, etc. ....	5.00	Tobacco .....	11.91
	<hr/>	One young pig .....	3.75
	\$136.08	Implements, etc. ....	6.18
			<hr/>
			\$152.24

Food raised and consumed on the farm, about..... 35.00

This family lives on the seacoast of Galway, so that fishing supplies part of the revenue. The following shows the condition of a family of four persons, "in the poorest circumstances," as officially reported:

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURES.	
Sale of eggs .....	\$5.75	Rent .....	\$5.00
Sixty days' labor, at 25c..	15.00	Taxes .....	.50
Herding cattle .....	20.00	Meal .....	29.25
	<hr/>	Clothing .....	2.50
	\$40.75	Groceries .....	20.00
			<hr/>
			\$57.25

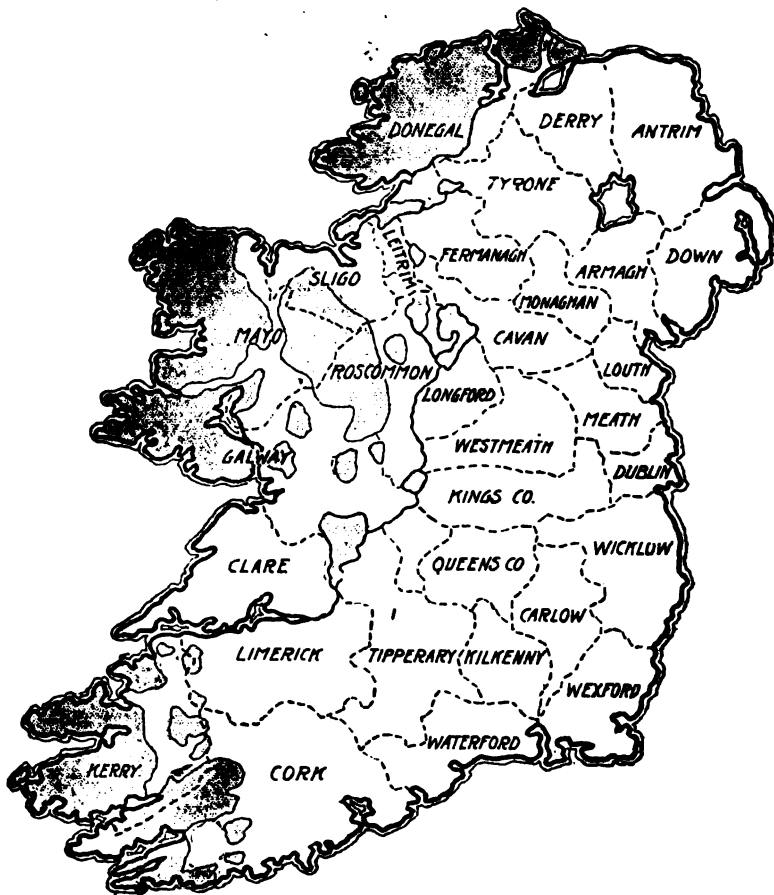
Potatoes grown on the farm and eaten..... 30.00

It will be observed that this family of four persons consumes \$79.25 worth of food during the year, or at the rate of less than five and one-half cents per day each. Coarse meal and potatoes form the staple diet. These are only figures, but they are government figures, and may aid Americans to understand what the poverty in "congested districts" is. The family just cited is typical of thousands of families in the West. There are many more, however, whose condition is somewhat better. I mean those whose able-bodied members migrate to England and Scotland every year and toil in the fields, returning with a few pounds in money to carry them through the winter. The reports give the receipts of such a family, from all sources, at \$205 for the year; expenditures, \$213.75; home produce consumed, \$75. And this family, consisting of six persons, is cited as being in

## PROBLEM OF THE LAND

"comparatively good circumstances"! As to the general conditions of life before the establishment of the Congested Districts Board, I quote the report of the Department of Agriculture:

"The great majority of the inhabitants were in possession of small plots—they could hardly be called farms—generally about two to four acres in extent. The rents for these holdings varied

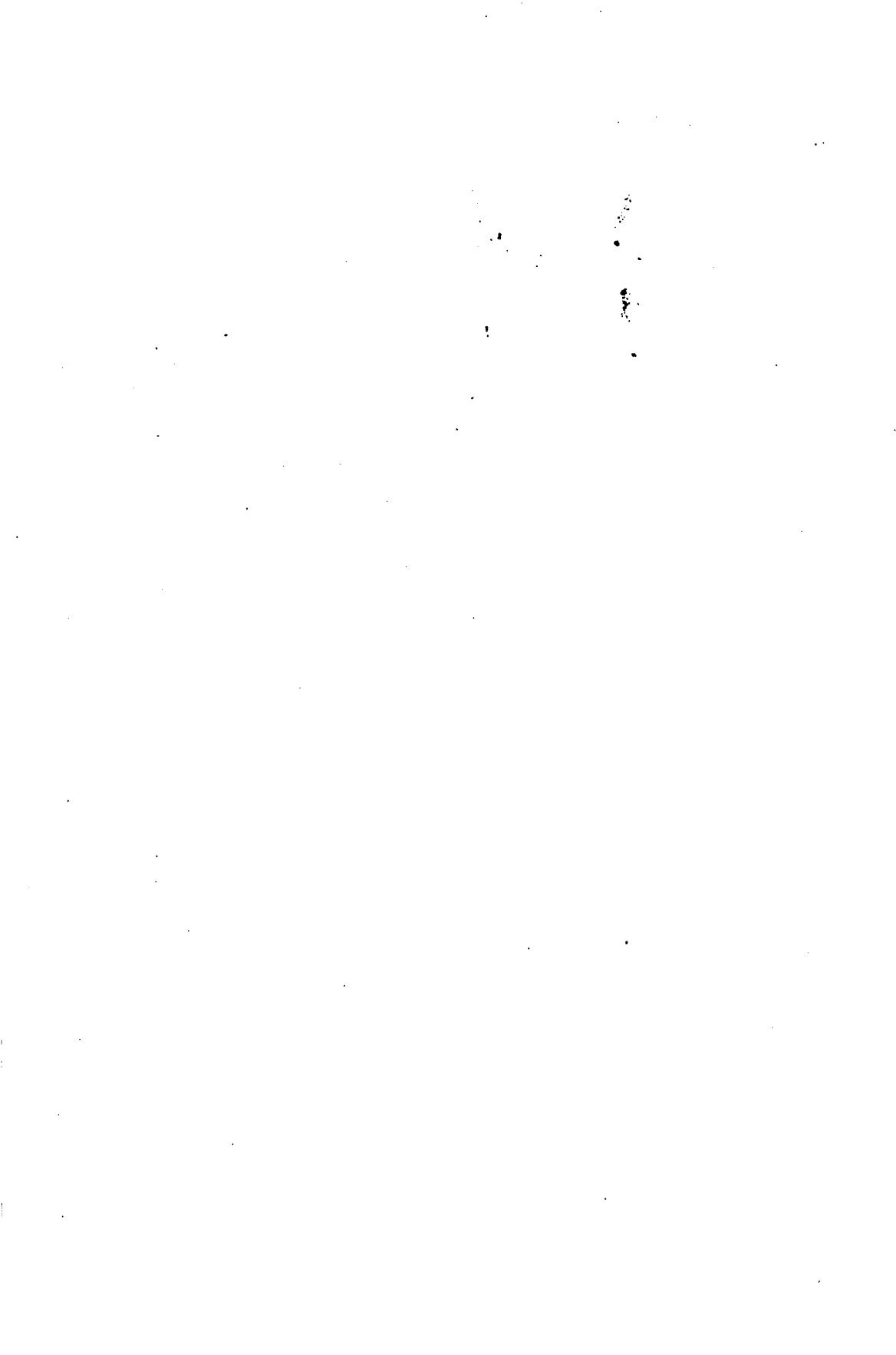


SHADED PORTIONS SHOW CONGESTED DISTRICTS

from a few shillings to several pounds a year. The plots were usually planted with potatoes and oats, and the methods of cultivation were extremely primitive. There was no rotation of crops, no adequate supply of manure and no proper system of drainage, whilst the breeds of live stock were worn out and of little value. The result was that the inhabitants were forced to depend very



**A BUSINESS STREET IN CASTLEBAR, COUNTY MAYO.**



largely upon certain secondary sources of income of an uncertain and varying nature. Many of them received occasional gifts from relatives in America, whilst weaving, knitting and sewing formed other small subsidiary sources of income. The results of sea fishing helped the families dwelling along the coast to eke out a scanty living, whilst those living inland depended largely upon the wages earned during some months of the year as migratory agricultural laborers in England or Scotland.

"Thus in most cases the people did not really live on the produce of their holdings, but rather on some secondary source of income, such as field labor in England or Scotland. They paid a rent for their holding, generally not because of its agricultural value, but rather because it was necessary to have some home for their family. In a 'good year' many of the inhabitants were little more than free from the dread of hunger, whilst a bad year, arising from the complete or partial failure of their crops, produced a condition of semi-starvation."

A brief and comprehensive statement of conditions in the congested districts was given by a witness before a royal commission on local taxation. He said: "In the congested districts there are two classes, namely, the poor and the destitute." But while the report of the Department of Agriculture is of great interest, it fails to set forth certain vital facts. These are:

First—With the exception of a few restricted localities, conditions are precisely the same as before the creation of the Congested Districts Board. The extracts quoted above might be read in the present tense.

Second—The congestion of people is on barren lands, where, within easy reach of them, often at the very borders of their wretched holdings, there are thousands of acres of prime lands, rented by the landlords to cattle grazers.

Third—Until the people are enabled by the government to purchase adequate farms they will remain in the same condition of hopeless misery.

I would not be understood in this as criticising the work of the Congested Districts Board. That would be an absurd attitude for one who is hardly more than a casual visitor. But while even the most fervent land reformers praise the zeal of the board and welcome its uplifting influence, they point out that progress is desperately slow and that all the good accomplished has but touched the edges of the problem. What has been done during the eleven years? They have

purchased estates aggregating 153,000 acres, at a total cost of \$2,154,000. But the purchase is only a single step in the process. Usually several years are spent in negotiations, and when the matter is arranged other years pass in perfecting the complex details of transfer. Meanwhile the people suffer and die.

Yet whatever criticism there may be regarding delays, there can be none regarding the ultimate results. Clare Island is a splendid example of what the board is doing and how the work is benefiting the people. The property contains nearly 4000 acres. Under the tenant system the most desperate confusion grew up. There were no fences. No tenant knew positively where his land began or ended. The whole island was practically held in common, and cattle strayed at will through the meager crops. The ninety-five tenants who existed there paid nearly \$2500 rent for their miserable little holdings. The first thing the board did was to build a wall across the island, separating the common grazing ground from the tilled lands. Drains were constructed and fifty miles of fences were built. The most complicated task was rearranging the scattered holdings so that each tenant should have a compact farm. The land was "striped" into regular areas, stone walls dividing one from another. Thus, for the first time in their lives, the people found themselves with lands which they could call their own.

When the board took hold of the property the occupants owed two years' rent to the landlord. Employment upon the draining and fencing work enabled them to pay up these arrears. For four years more they were tenants of the board, and the report shows they paid every penny due. They are now actual owners of their farms, paying an aggregate of \$1725 a year as purchase money instead of \$2500 a year as rent.

In all of these districts, it will be remembered, the term "congestion" does not mean that the population is excessive for the whole area, but that through the operation of the land system the people have been crowded into barren patches, while the best soil grows only grass for pasturing cattle. The great object of the board is to provide for each family and sell to that family a farm which is big enough—

say twenty-five to thirty acres—and rich enough to furnish a comfortable living when industriously worked. Since the people are crowded together in spots, and since often there is not enough good land in the neighborhood to distribute, the board is compelled to arrange migration. Thus some tenants in a crowded locality will be persuaded to give up their holdings, which are then divided among those who remain, until each has a compact and adequate farm. The migrants then move to another district, where similar provision has been made for them.

It will be seen that the whole problem is infinitely complicated. It is necessary to recolonize the west of Ireland, and as the greater part of the land is still owned by landlords, the operation is difficult. Rather may we say that under present conditions it is hopeless. Every man in Great Britain whose opinion is recognized as sound is convinced now that the solution of the Irish land question, and particularly of the terrible problem of the West, can be found only in abolishing the archaic system of Irish landlordism and establishing the peasants as proprietors of the land they till.

On my first trip to the West I was rather astonished to find that the train consisted of more than a dozen carriages, and that the third-class compartments were crowded with sturdy-looking men. Having heard of the poverty of the districts into which I was going, I was not prepared to see such heavy passenger traffic. Surely these men had not been away for a holiday? At a junction station a broad-shouldered, bearded man, with a heavy bundle hanging on his shoulder, cheerfully enlightened me.

"Sure, sir, we've all been over in England workin'," he said. "Some have been gone three months, some six. I've been away since April myself, and there's twenty good pounds in me pocket this blessed minute to pay the rent an' buy a bit of bacon an' that for the winter."

"But what do you go to England for? Why not stay on your own farm and work that?"

"Ay, why not? You're a nice spoken gentleman, but beggin' yer pardon, it's little you know of our country. I can see that. Why don't we stay here? God save you, sir, an' do you think we go to England because we like it? Is



it likely we'd leave our own farms if so be we'd get food an' clothes an' rent by stayin'? Bad luck to it, we go because we have to. My boy's away in America, so there's only the old woman an' me, an' I have to leave half the year an' work in a furrin' land—England, mind ye—to get the money we need."

"Then why not go to England altogether?"

The big man turned and looked over the desolate country. The winter dusk was falling swiftly and the outlines of the hills were indistinct, but we could still see the empty land and feel its rugged unkindness. Yet the man's voice was very tender as he spoke.

"Twenty miles on," he said, "there's a bit of a cabin and a bit of land. In that cabin I was born and on that land my father worked. Is it like, now, that I'd leave it to live in England or anywhere else? Man, have ye got a home? It's a rough place at the best, and not all the muscles I've got can dig a livin' out of it. But, God be good to me, I love it, sir."

I learned much more at other times from men and writings concerning this yearly migration of the workers, but the great truth of it lay in the simple words of this rugged toiler. They love their land, these Irish!

Consider what they do. They occupy little barren patches, where even with prosperous seasons life is a struggle. They know they cannot, howsoever great their industry, feed and clothe themselves from the products of the soil. They know that every spring the strongest of the family must go away and work among strangers. Yet when the hard task is over, when they have painfully saved the pennies earned, they come back to the old places and fight through the cruel winter with the earnings of their sacrifice.

According to the returns compiled by the Board of Trade, 24,438 persons migrated from Connaught alone in 1902. It is estimated that they brought back average earnings of \$37.50, or a total of \$916,425. That amounts to twenty-seven and one-half per cent. of the entire rent of the province, and has to be earned outside of the country. There are 31,873 families in Connaught whose holdings are worth less than \$20 a year. Therefore, nearly every one of these

families had to send a member to England to earn the necessities of life for the winter. A few facts regarding definite localities will illustrate how grievous is the condition which entails this unnatural system of migratory labor. One priest in Donegal reported a few years ago that out of 7000 persons in his parish 1000 had to spend several months of each year away from home. Some went to the more prosperous counties in the east of Ireland, the greater number to England. From the district of Rathmore, Kerry, the priest reported, 200 to 300 girls left in the middle of March and did not return until December 1. Perhaps the worst feature of the system is that it does not spare the women, nor even the children. A special correspondent of the London Times reported that the migrants included "practically every man, boy and girl able to work."

"It cannot be regarded as satisfactory or desirable," he said, "to perpetuate a social condition in which it is needful for children of ages varying from nine to fifteen years to leave their homes and be employed chiefly in agricultural work in distant places without care or oversight."

If the reader will remember that we are talking of human beings, of women and children, he will find nothing "dry" in the formal reports and figures dealing with this question. The Bessborough Commission stated:

"The condition of the poorer tenants in numerous parts of Ireland, where it is said they are not able, if they had the land gratis, to live by cultivating it, is by some thought to be an almost insoluble problem."

The O'Connor Don, a member of that commission, added this:

"There are portions of Ireland in which the land is so bad and is so thickly populated that the questions of tenure and rent are mere trifles. If the present occupiers had the land forever and for nothing, they could not, in the best of years, live decently, and in bad years they must be in a state of starvation."

Mr. P. W. Coyne, superintendent of statistics in the Department of Agriculture, wrote two years ago:

"They (the migratory laborers) are not, properly speaking, agricultural laborers at all. They are as a class

small landholders, or the wives, sons and daughters of small landholders. Were it not for the annual migration to England and Scotland, these poor people, low as their standard of comfort is, certainly could not make ends meet."

The Congested Districts Board report says:

"In a good year they are little more than free from the dread of hunger, while a complete or partial failure of their crop involves, as a consequence, proportionately greater or less suffering from insufficient food."

Now for some eloquent figures concerning the migration in this year 1902. From Mayo county, 18,838 men went to England and Scotland. They represented thirty-six per cent. of the adult male population and forty-five per cent. of the adult population engaged in agriculture. The figures from some of the districts are even more startling. The following table shows the total migration from the districts named and the percentage of the total adult male population represented:

	Migrants.	Per cent.
Swinford .....	5919	59
Castlerea .....	4560	50
Westport .....	3056	49
Claremorris .....	3411	50
Castlebar .....	2173	41

Year after year they leave their homes, their families and their friends, and go far away, among strangers, to gather with bitter toil the money for the winter's food. And the returning season always finds them back, clinging doggedly to the barren soil. The man on the station platform was right.

"God be good to them, they love the land."

## XI

### THE WAR ON LIBERTY

We sat, John Fitzgibbon and I, on either side of his big fireplace, where the turf embers glowed redly. My mind pictured again the country I had ridden through, the fair lands where there are only the scars of leveled homesteads, and the cruel barrens where men and women strive in helpless misery. It was good to think that this man with the sturdy frame and rugged, honest face and straight-thinking brain had devoted himself to the people. Yet it seemed a pity, too, that the state which rules this country should have made him and his kind implacable enemies of the system of government. The authorities had tried to brand him a criminal, and even now, as I saw with my own eyes, he is tracked by police as though he were plotting violence. Here was a man of solid sense, honest in every fiber, his training and his social position influencing him toward conservatism. By his own efforts he had built up a prosperous business, the success of which he endangered every hour he remained actively in politics. Why should such a man be subjected to harassment, to persecution, to the indignity of convict stripes? Was he really a menace to the peace of the empire or the lives and property of the King's subjects? I asked him those questions, and his answer came at once, without a show of resentment.

"You see these two hands?" he said, holding them forth. "I would give them both, if the need came, to save the life of the worst landlord in Ireland. Yet with these hands I have broken stone and picked oakum as a common criminal. It is charged that I am a dangerous person. Oh, I tell you, the officials of the English government are fools that they pursue such methods! They sneer at Ireland because she is disloyal, and all the while they use the utmost endeavor and ingenuity to make her disloyal."

"Tell me why you have been in prison."

"Would that interest Americans? Well, perhaps it would. From all I know of your country, I don't think they understand this part of our system. In spite of my interests as a merchant, which ought to make me cautious, I have been unable to keep out of this land fight. You'll understand that because I know the people, I live among them and see their sufferings day by day. Well, my first offense was in 1887, in a speech at a public meeting. There had been some evictions that were not justified, and there was a good deal of feeling over the matter. Some of the people were bitter because certain men had been selling food to the police in charge of the empty houses. When I spoke of the evictions a man in the audience cried out: 'How about those who are supplying milk to the police?' There was a laugh, and I thought best to pass over the question as a joke. So I said: 'I don't know anything about the milk, but I am inclined to think they won't get much cream.' There was another laugh, and the subject was dropped. I got a month at hard labor for that."

"In the name of Gilbert and Sullivan, why and how?"

"You know how the police watch public meetings? One of them, supposed to be an expert shorthand writer, is sent to the meeting. He is surrounded by a guard of policemen armed with rifles, who force a way for him, if necessary, until he is close to the speakers. He takes every word as spoken—or swears he does. His report goes to the police authorities, who prosecute whenever they desire to harass a man or check his influence or frighten the people. I was arrested."

• "Now for the system. The district had been proclaimed, under the Crimes Act, and the ordinary privileges of defense were suspended. I was tried by two magistrates, sent down by Dublin Castle, paid by Dublin Castle, removable by Dublin Castle. The witnesses were the police, paid by Dublin Castle. Jury trial was denied me. The two castle magistrates had summary jurisdiction. I was charged with intimidating public officers in discharge of their duty and inciting a boycott against them. I was sentenced to one month at hard labor. There was no appeal from the decision



JOHN FITZGIBBON.



IMPROVEMENTS ON CLARE ISLAND (See Page 133).



on points of fact. I was taken from my wife and family and business and sent to Castlebar jail, where I was put in stripes and placed among thieves and drunkards and criminals of the most degraded type. I was put to breaking stone, picking oakum and other burdensome work. For the first three days my breakfast and supper were bread and water, my dinner a mixture of oatmeal and Indian meal. After that I had the regular fare, including coarse soup three times a week, potatoes twice a week, a little milk daily and a fixed amount of bread, but no meat. During the whole month I slept on a bare plank bench."

"And your sole offense was the remark you quoted?"

"As I'm a living man, it was. I hadn't been out of prison long when they were after me again. At a sale of cattle, which had been seized from a poor man for non-payment of rent, I made a speech denouncing the system of landlordism. I didn't utter a word more radical than you can hear any day at meetings in England or Scotland, or in the House of Commons itself. There was no thought or effect of inciting to crime, as was charged. It was a purely political speech, dealing with conditions, not persons. But I was sentenced to four months, without hard labor. Again I was put in stripes and picked oakum under guard. I conformed to all the rules, until one morning a warder roughly ordered myself and three other political prisoners to perform a certain menial and degrading task, though there were plenty of criminals there who might properly have been sent to do it. We refused, were summoned before the governor and he condemned us to twenty-four hours on bread and water. A man can stand a day on starvation fare, but that was not the worst of the punishment. My cell was stripped bare, even the printed rules being taken from the wall, with the bench and plank bed. I was not allowed out for exercise, but was locked all the time in that bare, cramped space alone. No light was permitted, and as this was in January, I was in darkness from four o'clock in the afternoon until eight the next morning. At eight in the evening they put in the plank bed and then I could lie down. During this term I slept on the plank for a month.

"I had been out of prison just a fortnight when a new



charge was brought up. During a busy day some one called my attention to a policeman in the crowd in my shop. I asked him what he wanted, and he said he was there on duty. I told him he had no right there without a warrant, and led him to the door. He returned and took away with him a woman who had been standing at a counter. She was the wife of a man who had grabbed an evicted farm. I was accused of refusing to sell her goods. As a matter of fact, I had not seen her at all. The sentence was six months, but I appealed to Judge O'Connor Morris, of the County Court, on questions of law, and he reduced it two months. There was no further appeal, so I went to jail again. During the year I was seven months in the stripes of a criminal. I had done nothing but denounce a system which is cruel and unjust, and which the English government now confesses must be swept away."

But the police are not yet satisfied, and a few weeks ago they tried to send this man to prison for six months. By his sheer, dogged will and unflinching honesty he whipped the agents of persecution in their own court.

"That was the time our friend Reilly, who followed us this afternoon," he said, "made his bid for promotion."

I have the record of this case, and will give it as briefly as may be. On August 13 Mr. Fitzgibbon attended an eviction on the estate of Lord de Freyne, so as to assist any tenants who needed his help. Afterward, as he could not learn where the next eviction would take place and as he wanted to be present, he followed the agent and bailiffs in his cart. While they drove along the country roads the agent was preceded and followed by a dozen policemen on bicycles, the district inspector and a subordinate riding in a cart. At a certain point in the road Mr. Fitzgibbon, finding that the police were blocking his path purposely, drove past the inspector, taking the wrong side of the road because he was forced to, and so got among the bicycles. There was almost a collision. The zealous Reilly leaped from his wheel and seized the horse's bridle. Mr. Fitzgibbon struck the animal with his whip and urged it forward, but when the inspector called out to him to stop he did so. The official charged him with trying to run down the policemen. Mr. Fitzgibbon

declared he had no such intention, and the explanation was apparently accepted. Later he was arrested, charged with obstructing and assaulting the police in the discharge of their duties.

Conducting his own defense, Mr. Fitzgibbon had all the witnesses excluded from the court room except the one under examination. It was well he did so. Reilly swore the defendant struck at him with the whip, and all the policemen agreed that the assault and obstruction took place. But in important details the stories varied grotesquely. The crowning point was reached when the policeman riding with the inspector admitted that his superior had ordered him to turn their horse and block the road against the civilian. There the witness flatly contradicted the inspector and proved that the obstruction was a police offense. I wish there were space here for Mr. Fitzgibbon's summing up in his own behalf. It was worthy of a King's counsel. I must give one paragraph, if only to show how a country storekeeper in Ireland can defend his liberties in a hostile court:

"Now, your Worships, what have these proceedings unfolded? To any impartial mind it is evident that a deliberate and unlawful conspiracy has been formed to deprive me of my liberty. I am one of the King's subjects, and you have no evidence to show why an attack should be made upon me more than upon any other man, even yourselves upon the bench, to deprive me of what I value as highly as any other man. I do not intend to delay you at any length in prefacing my summary of the evidence, but I do say it is a sad state of things in this unfortunate country of ours when the men who should be the examples of law and order, of honor and uprightness can come into this court and tell the tales you have listened to, not one of which corroborated the others.

"Respect for the law! In any well-governed country the aim of every citizen, and more particularly those in charge of the peace, should be to administer the law justly. And if you want to gain respect for the law, you must administer it in such fashion that the poorest peasant in his cottage will feel that he has its protection just as much as the lord in his castle. What has this case shown? It has been actually nothing more than an inquiry into the conduct of

the police and their methods of dealing with political opponents. I am certainly recognized as a political opponent of the present government, but that is no reason why unfair means should be resorted to in order to remove me."

"The charges were dismissed," said Mr. Fitzgibbon. "But I suppose they will get me again some time. You saw this afternoon how I am dogged by the police. There is one on guard in front of my place of business all the time. I cannot go on the street or drive into the country without having a uniform at my heels. They even watch members of my family. They have followed us to mass on Sunday morning."

"But," I said, "how can you talk calmly of a system which may drive you into prison at any time?"

The face of John Fitzgibbon was gravely thoughtful for a moment. Then he said:

"I value my liberty as much as any man. Perhaps more than others, because I have suffered, and my wife and children have suffered. But I will not abate one lawful act or word to save myself from persecution, if that act or word can serve the people I fight for. Some of us must endure that all may some day be free."

It was said so quietly and simply that I could not reply for a moment. But I was curious to know how far these experiences had embittered this man.

"Supposing that the land question were settled and government abuses abolished," I asked, "would it be possible for England to win back the loyalty of Ireland?"

A look of whimsical despair showed in his face.

"God bless you," he said, "it's more to England's service than ours to give us justice. I and men like me are the best friends England has, did the fools but realize it. We risk our fortunes and our liberties to bring about a settlement of this question. They know that the settlement will benefit them, and they imprison us. Yet I believe that when justice is done to Ireland the empire will have no more loyal supporters than those the government is persecuting to-day. There is not on the face of the earth a more peaceable race than the Irish, no race more forgiving, none more capable of affection where it is deserved."

One thing is clear, England is better served by men like John Fitzgibbon than Ireland is by England's Lord Lieutenants.

For a further understanding of what coercion in Ireland means, I commend study of another case against John Fitzgibbon. He has served four terms of imprisonment, and may, therefore, be taken as a type of the "hardened criminal." It will be interesting to examine one of the recent crimes which his Majesty's government thought so heinous as to merit severe penalty.

For utterances made at a public meeting at Gortaganny on January 12, 1902, Mr. Fitzgibbon was condemned by Dublin Castle magistrates. He appealed, on the ground of new evidence, and on March 17 his case was reviewed by Judge Morris. With the utmost indifference to his own fate he simply addressed the court on behalf of the oppressed tenants. For simple, touching eloquence and unselfish devotion his speech was a little masterpiece. A few paragraphs will illustrate the stamp of the man whom the government would make a felon:

"The case to be presented to you," he said, "is not so much in my own behalf as in behalf of the tenants. I have no desire to go to prison again, as, if I am convicted, this will be my fourth term in jail. There is no man more attached to his home and family than I am. Yet I do not present this case with a view to lessening the sentence imposed upon me by the lower court. My object will be to place before your Honor the true facts leading up to the action condemned."

I have described the campaign instituted by the tenants of the de Freyne and Murphy estates. Living in abject misery within sight of the prosperous tenants on the Dillon estate, which was purchased by the Congested Districts Board, these men determined to agitate for a reduction in their own rents. Mr. Fitzgibbon tried to prevent a general refusal to pay rent. He failed, and then was in duty bound to assist in the campaign. The Crown Prosecutor charged that "other means" should have been resorted to, "but," said Mr. Fitzgibbon, "I will show your Honor that I practically

exhausted all other means before I took part in these radical measures."

Beginning with 1894, when he made a personal appeal to Chief Secretary John Morley, Mr. Fitzgibbon described the efforts he had made during the succeeding years to aid the unfortunate tenants. He made strong recommendations as a witness before a committee of the House of Commons in 1896. Even as late as the summer of 1901 he tried again. Learning that Chief Secretary Wyndham was on a secret visit to Castlerea, the merchant called on him.

"I wanted to see," he said, "what could be done for these poor tenants or whether there was any hope for their cause. I went to Mr. Wyndham to give him information which I thought he would be glad to receive. His secretary asked my name and business, which I gave promptly. After a few minutes I was told Mr. Wyndham was in a great hurry and could not see me, so I could do nothing more than send him a copy of the evidence I gave in the House of Commons. I never heard from Mr. Wyndham, except through the present proceedings to put me in prison. I just mention this to show that it is a foolish idea to think Irishmen need not go beyond the ordinary means of drawing attention to Irish grievances. Some agitation similar to the one we are engaged in at present on these estates is absolutely necessary before you can fasten on the people who undertake to know our business better than we do ourselves."

After picturing in vivid terms the wretched condition of the tenants for whom he was fighting, the defendant finished thus:

"If you see your way to confine me in Sligo jail for trying to improve the condition of these poor people, I shall go cheerfully, because I believe that proceedings of this kind and the imprisonment of men who, if properly treated, would be as law-abiding as any Englishmen, will mean another step in solving the Irish land question."

Now, the most remarkable feature of the case was this: Mr. Fitzgibbon was condemned not for the speech of January 12, which was the only one mentioned in the summons, but for the reason that violent speeches were made at previous meetings by other persons. Judge Morris explained

this remarkable provision of the coercion laws with great unction. He said:

"I am not at all surprised that Mr. Fitzgibbon and Mr. Webb (another defendant) think it a hardship and injustice that previous assemblies of the same kind as that of January 12 are taken in evidence in reference to the meeting named. But that is the law and common sense—the acts and speeches at the previous meetings are admissible as showing the character and application of the meeting named in the charge."

The judge then went over in detail the records of meetings held on November 10, November 17 and December 29, 1901. At the first "a very violent speech" was made by Conor O'Kelly, M. P. But mark the judicial reference to the defendant:

"On that occasion Mr. Fitzgibbon made a speech—and that is the only evidence I will admit against him—to which no great exception could be taken. Really there was not very much in that speech. On November 17 he said the people were to keep a tight hold of the money in their pockets. There is also an observation about grabbers and talk about striking blows, fighting and so on. That is not a very bad speech. On December 29 Mr. Webb said they would light a fire which the de Freynes and Murphys would not quench. [No speech by Mr. Fitzgibbon.]

"Now, if the meeting of January 12 stood alone, I think there would be very little to complain against these gentlemen; but, of course, the law officers of the Crown know perfectly well that all these antecedent meetings are evidence respecting the meeting of January 12. On January 12 Mr. Fitzgibbon made some strong remarks about appeals taken from me to the Judge of Assize. There was no very strong observation, but they talked about a fight and not minding the plank bed in prison, and they said Lord de Freyne and others would have to bundle and go. All these assemblies, and what took place after them, and the speeches made at them must be taken, one and all, as part of what took place on January 12, as showing the quality and character of the meeting."

From these judicial remarks it is plain that Mr. Fitzgibbon was condemned, not for what he said himself—that was trifling, the judge admitted—but for the speeches of Conor O'Kelly and others, and the acts of meetings held months before that named in the summons. Judge Morris continued with a remarkable denunciation of the land purchase schemes carried out under the law. Indeed, he transgressed himself the laws which he invoked against the prisoners. Furthermore, he said:

"I admired Mr. Fitzgibbon's speech in court very much, and with a great deal of it I thoroughly agree. In this country abuses grow up, and concessions, as a rule, are extorted only by agitation. That has been the history of this country since 1782."

Nevertheless, the defendants had to suffer for adopting means which the judge confessed were necessary. He confirmed the sentence of the castle magistrates—two months in prison and bail for two months more.

"Will these gentlemen consent to find bail?" he asked.

"Oh, no, your Honor," replied Mr. Fitzgibbon. "It just means imprisonment for four months."

The answer illustrates the spirit of the men who are fighting the battles of the tenants. By obtaining bail Mr. Fitzgibbon might have saved himself two months' imprisonment. He preferred to suffer rather than admit, by giving bail, that he had transgressed the law. Surely this honest country merchant is a type of the "village Hampden," whom it is folly to attempt to crush. He served his four months in prison, but every day he spent in a cell struck off many days from the time which stands between Ireland oppressed and Ireland free.



A PRETTY IRISH COTTAGE.



SPINNING.





## XII

### \* WHAT COERCION IS

As this letter is written, nearly fifty prominent Irishmen are in prison or awaiting trial for political offenses, and the Lord Lieutenant only knows how many more are bound thither. Let the reader who is tired of the dry details of the land question ponder on this interesting fact for a little. According to American law, these men have committed no crimes. The statutes under which Englishmen enjoy liberty do not accuse them. They are stamped criminals because they dared to denounce legalized robbery and agitate for legal remedy. They are subjected to confinement, hardship and degradation because they have talked politics, advised co-operation against injustice and assailed a rotten system of spoliation.

This is the fruit of one hundred years of "union." It is not enough that Ireland should be governed by foreigners—for such in truth the English are by their own proud admission; it is not enough that her people should have suffered grievously by class laws, until the very soil cries out in agony; but to this must be added a campaign against liberty, and into the wounds of conquest and injustice must be rubbed the salt of insolence and tyranny.

Representative public men of Ireland recently visited America, and at their meetings appeals were made for a defense fund. It was declared that the British government was seeking, through a system of "coercion," to crush the agitation for justice. What did this mean? The word is simple enough. Our laws apply coercion every day. The thief, the murderer, the criminal of whatever sort, feels the heavy hand of society upon his shoulder and hears the grim order, "Stop!" But in Ireland who are coerced, and why I append a list of some of the victims at this date. Some are in prison, others are awaiting trial or sentence, some have

\*This chapter was written in Dublin, in January, 1903.

been released after serving their terms, but all the cases are actually of last year, 1902 :

WILLIAM H. K. REDMOND, M. P., six months.

MICHAEL REDDY, M. P., seven months.

WILLIAM DUFFY, M. P., three months.

JOHN ROCHE, M. P., four months' hard labor; two months added in default of bail; and again summoned.

J. P. FARRELL, M. P., proprietor of the Longford Leader, five months' hard labor.

P. A. McHUGH, M. P., editor of the Sligo Champion, two months; had already served three months.

JOHN O'DONNELL, M. P., six months; fifth term in prison.

E. HAVILAND-BURKE, M. P., one month hard labor.

WILLIAM LOWRY, chairman of Bier Poor Law Board, five months.

MICHAEL HOGAN, three months.

M. GLENNON, United Irish League organizer, three months.

DANIEL POWELL, editor of the Midland Tribune, four months.

DENIS KILBRIDE, ex-M. P., now serving four months; just tried and sentenced to four months more.

CARROLL NAGLE, six weeks.

JAMES LYNAM, six months.

RODOLPHUS MAHER, two months.

JOSEPH GANTLEY, two months.

THOMAS SEARSON, six weeks.

JAMES MURNANE, five weeks.

J. A. O'SULLIVAN, United Irish League organizer, three months.

ANDREW HOLOHAN, six weeks.

T. MCCARTHY, editor of the Irish People, two months.

T. O'DWYER, publisher of the Irish People, two months.

STEPHEN HOLLAND, foreman printer of the Irish People, one day.

T. FLANAGAN, J. P., Corofin, four months' hard labor; driven insane by imprisonment; now in Limerick Lunatic Asylum.

MARTIN FINNERTY, six months' hard labor.

JOHN LOHAN, three months' hard labor; two months added in default of bail.

JAMES KILMARTIN, three months.

S. P. HARRIS, six months.

DAVID SHEEHAN, four months.

B. McTERNAN, two months' hard labor.

M. O'DWYER, five months.

H. LYNAM, editor of the Waterford Star, two months.

P. J. RAHILLY, United Irish League organizer, summoned for trial.

J. BUCKLEY, proprietor of the Limerick Leader, ten months' hard labor.

DENIS JOHNSTON, served five months; recently summoned on a new charge.

J. F. O'KEEFE, summoned.

P. J. MONAGHAN, summoned.

MICHAEL GARRICK, summoned.

J. G. GUILTY, awaiting sentence.

PATRICK FITZPATRICK, two months' hard labor.

THOMAS LARKIN, two months.

JOHN MITCHELL, two months' hard labor.

MRS. ANNE O'MAHONY, a widow, proprietor of the Waterford Star, two months.

Now, what crimes had these men—and this widow—committed? I am not able, unfortunately, to give the charges in each case, but I am assured by men in whom I have the highest confidence that not one of these persons by act or word transgressed the ordinary laws recognized by the courts and society. They are, in fact, victims of a special statute passed with the distinct purpose of crushing free speech and the free press, the provisions of the statute being enforced by a system of summary trial and conviction. I have called it martial law, and such it is in effect, though not in name. The official title is "Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," better known as the Crimes Act. In the hands of the English administrators it is an ingenious instrument of oppression. Technically, it is directed against those who conspire to compel or induce any person "not to let, hire, use or occupy any land, or not to deal with, work for or hire any person or persons in the ordinary course of trade"; against those "who shall wrongfully and without legal authority use violence or intimidation" toward any person; against those who take part in any riot or unlawful assembly, or who "incite any other person to commit any of the offenses hereinbefore mentioned."

In plain terms, as will be seen, the act is intended to discourage boycotting, intimidation and violence against those who take advantage of the unjust land laws and assist in depriving the people of their lands. So far so good. These crimes are abhorrent to every lover of fair play, and should be punished by due process of law. But in the last paragraph quoted the authorities have a weapon placed in their hands by which they can thrust into prison any person obnoxious to themselves or their friends, provided he is brave enough to make a speech or write an article denouncing the land system. In the act the term "intimidation" is defined

as including "any words or acts intended and calculated to put any person in fear of any injury or danger to himself, or to any member of his family, or to any person in his employment, or in fear of any injury to or loss of property, business, employment or means of living." This is elastic enough, surely. But add the paragraph about "inciting" to these acts, and the law becomes a sweeping prohibition of ordinary political discussion. For, it should be explained, it is not necessary to prove that any person has actually been placed in fear of loss or injury. In scores of cases the accused is charged with uttering words "calculated to intimidate persons unknown," and scores of convictions have been obtained where it was not shown that any person presumably concerned ever heard of or read the expressions referred to. Hence men have been sent to prison for expressing by voice or pen sentiments which "intimidated" persons who were quite ignorant of the utterances.

Yet the amazing substance of the law is less obnoxious to free institutions, if that is possible, than the manner of its administration. The Crimes Act, while always available, is put in force by proclamation. When, therefore, political opposition to the government becomes so active in any district that the authorities deem it expedient to check public discussion, that district is "proclaimed" by the Lord Lieutenant and his Privy Council. By simply writing his noble name at the end of a proclamation he imposes upon the obnoxious district these conditions:

Trial by jury suspended.

Armed police attend every public meeting, taking notes of the speeches.

Every utterance in an opposition newspaper is subjected to scrutiny, and every sentence which can be construed as unlawful, under the astounding terms of the Crimes Act, is made an excuse for prosecution.

The police furnish the witnesses.

The persons accused are tried by two magistrates, who are appointed, paid and removable by Dublin Castle.

The prosecutor is an official sent to the scene of trial by Dublin Castle.

The castle magistrates have summary jurisdiction, and

almost invariably condemn the prisoners, the maximum sentence being six months' hard labor.

I have said that this in effect is martial law, and I give these facts in support of the statement. If further proof is needed, let me add something else. The castle magistrates, through a grotesque revival of a long obsolete statute, can summarily bring before them any person they choose and put him under bonds. An act passed in the reign of Edward III, at a "Parliament held at Westminster on the Sunday next before the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, A. D. 1360-61," is the instrument. By it magistrates are empowered to "take and arrest all those that they may find by indictment or by suspicion and to put them in prison, and to take all of them that be of good fame, where they shall be found, sufficient surety and mainprise for their good behavior toward the King and his people, and others duly to punish." It is worthy of casual notice that the act originally read, as here translated from the archaic French, "Touz ceux qui sont de bone fame." Of course, it meant "all those who are not of good fame," and the missing word was easily supplied.

When a too free-spoken man is arraigned under this act he cannot defend himself. Judge Gibson, in the case of *Rice vs. Halpin*, February 26, 1901, said: "The authorities compel us to decide that in the case of sureties for good behavior evidence on behalf of the defendant cannot be heard. The result is most unfortunate."

If there were space, I could quote a dozen judges who, in addressing grand juries recently, commented upon the extraordinary absence of crime. Yet the Lord Lieutenant has proclaimed twenty-one of the thirty-two counties of Ireland, including the city of Dublin, and in these twenty-one counties the Crimes Act form of martial law is in force. A word must be added concerning the amazing powers of the police. The Royal Irish Constabulary is virtually a body of soldiers. This huge force, which is paid for by the Irish people, is controlled absolutely from London, through Dublin Castle. Detachments are quartered in towns and villages as ordered from headquarters.

These military police have powers which in free countries, such as America and England, are vested only in the

courts and are hedged about with many legal restrictions. They can summarily enter any newspaper office or news-stand and confiscate such papers as they desire. They can, without proclamation, prohibit any meeting. They can force their way into any public gathering, drag the speakers from the platform and disperse the citizens present, using force if they so desire. In a word, the English police in Ireland can suppress free speech at will. The people have only two means of meeting this power: They can submit or they can suffer imprisonment. It is a proof of the courage and devotion of the leaders that many of them persist in denouncing injustice and accept cheerfully the penalties.

I have tried to show that coercion in Ireland is a system which would cause Englishmen to rise up and sweep the government out of existence. They would not submit for a single day to the tyranny which their officials inflict upon the Irish people. In support of this statement I quote Mr. T. W. Russell, M. P., who, as I have stated, is a Scotchman, a Protestant and an opponent of Home Rule. In a speech at Leith, Scotland, he described the conditions in the west of Ireland, due to the atrocious land system, declaring that it "is a sin against God's law—a crime against humanity." He continued:

"But if I said this in County Mayo I should be haled before two Crimes Act magistrates. I should get three months with hard labor for saying it, and I should get three additional months if I failed to give bail that I would not say it again. This is an absolutely correct description of the facts and of the law. Gentlemen, it is a state of affairs such as this which drives Irish-born men to frenzy, which makes a mere 'unspeakable Scot' like myself hang his head in shame when he thinks of what is called the government of Ireland."

This is the opinion of a member of the British Parliament, a man who for years has fought for the maintenance of the Union as against Home Rule. I shall now give some specific instances showing how coercion is applied. First let me illustrate the attitude of some of the judges toward litigants, as set forth in official reports. At Castlereagh, a few weeks ago, Judge O'Connor Morris commented on some eviction cases before him. Certain tenants on the de Freyne

and Murphy estates had refused to pay rents demanded. Their excuse was that the rents were higher than the yearly purchase instalments paid by tenants on the Dillon estate, which had been bought by the Congested Districts Board and was being resold to the farmers. Their purpose was, as explained in previous letters, to bring the land question to a focus and compel the attention of the government. This is how Judge Morris denounced "land purchase," admittedly the only solution of the problem, and declared from the bench it would be worthless:

"In my opinion, these tenants have a great and legitimate grievance. It is due directly to the act of the executive government, which chose what is called the selling of the Dillon estate under a system absolutely falsely called land purchase. But this is not the way to remedy the grievance—stopping their rents and robbing the landlords. \* \* \* My opinion is there will be no land conference, and if there were, it would end in a battle of smoke. It would be absolutely worthless. Now, put that idea out of your head. \* \* \* This has reference to all the tenants in Ireland, but particularly the tenants of this estate. My strong advice to them, poor fools, is not to listen to ridiculous talk, but simply to go about their business and till their farms and pay their rents like honest men."

A grand jury at Mullingar, County Westmeath, two months ago presented to Judge Curran a resolution respectfully protesting against the proclamation of the county under the Crimes Act. The following dialogue ensued, as officially reported:

Judge Curran—"This resolution is altogether outside your business. Talking about a proclamation! There are twenty-three of you there, and let any man stand forward and say he has been coerced in any way. Don't be talking about coercion. It is all humbug! There is your precious resolution for you!" [The judge then tore up the resolution and threw the pieces of paper toward the grand jury.]

A Juror—"Might I say one word, your Honor?"

Judge Curran—"No; you are all discharged."

The Juror—"You said in your charge to us that there is boycotting in the county. Let us know one single instance."

Judge Curran—"You are discharged now as a grand jury, and if you talk in court I'll send you to jail."

Here are two charming examples of the judicial tem-



perament as observed in the courts which try Irishmen. And, of course, these judges are exempt from the provisions of the Crimes Act. It would never do to hint that Judge Morris to the tenants and Judge Curran to the grand jury were guilty of intimidation. For English comment on the latter case I quote from the London Speaker:

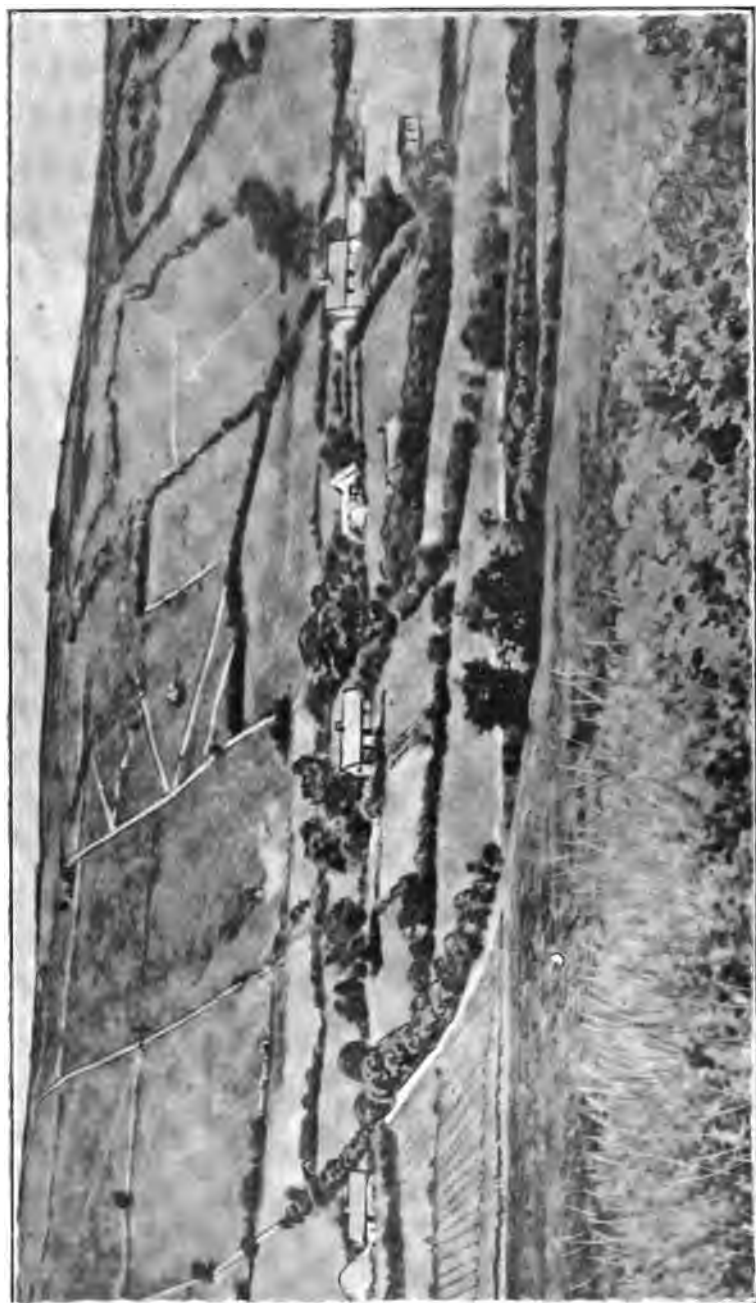
"It may be absurd to expect impartial conduct and judicial pronouncements from the Irish county court judges; but as members of a learned profession they might, at least, behave like gentlemen."

They might, indeed. But it is unfortunately true that some officials of the English government in Ireland do not consider that in their relations with the people they are bound by the ordinary obligations of courtesy and justice.

There are many well-meaning folk who have only one reply to all appeals made in behalf of Ireland, whether for equitable land laws, self-government or any other measure of justice long denied.

"Why is not Ireland submissive to the laws of the empire?" they say. "How can a people who are notoriously disloyal properly demand favor from a government toward which they evince only insolence and hatred?"

It is true enough that Ireland is disloyal. No other nation in the world exhibits such a terrible picture—virtually a whole people openly sympathizing with the armed enemies of the established government, rejoicing in the defeat of the imperial arms and sorrowing for the downfall of the forces which threatened the imperial supremacy. But upon whom does this unhappy condition reflect dishonor? No blood tie binds the Irish and the Boers, while there are many reasons for peaceful union between the Irish and the British. Is it reasonable to suppose that some inborn fanaticism has led them to turn their backs upon their natural allies and applaud the victories of aliens? This disloyalty is abnormal. The only just course is to inquire into the causes which underlie it. It is possible to conceive conditions wherein disloyalty is the only attitude left for a self-respecting people. In such case, should not criticism be directed at the system which forces men into political rebellion rather than at the rebels themselves?



PART OF A GRAZING ESTATE, DIVIDED INTO FARMS AND SOLD.



While many features of English government in Ireland are incitements to opposition, we are dealing here particularly with coercion, that ingenious system of exasperation which is daily widening the breach between the races. Coercion, as shown, is the suspension of ordinary forms of law and the substitution, under the cover of special statutes, of what is practically martial law. This system is inflicted on a country which is at peace, and where the records of the courts show that crime is proportionately less than in England itself. Does this appeal to the fair-minded man as an incentive to loyalty?

The Irish people to-day are subject to courts whose prejudice is apparent, and they have been stripped of every valuable protection guaranteed by the English law to the subject. The great engine of coercion under the courts is the Royal Irish Constabulary, an organized military garrison responsible solely to London, and enforcing their will upon the people by armed force. The police are censors of the newspapers. The police have control over public meetings. The police decide whether any gathering is lawful or unlawful. The police note every public utterance and declare it permissible or not, as pleases them. The police make the arrests, conduct the prosecutions and furnish the witnesses. The testimony is passed upon and the sentences are inflicted, without authority of juries, by police judges.

But we have not quite finished the tale of the police functions, for sometimes they furnish the crimes, too. There are cases on record where innocent men have been sent to penal servitude for crimes committed by policemen who sought promotion by making records for "efficiency." The most notorious cases of this kind were those involving Sergeant Sheridan, who was naturally regarded as one of the most useful officers in the constabulary. He was a member of the force for twenty years, and won promotion by his activity in making arrests and obtaining convictions. But justice overtook him at last, and even Englishmen were horrified to learn that in many cases he and his associates had sworn away the liberties of innocent men, charging them with crimes committed by the police.

An aged tramp—a man who could hardly walk and was

nearly blind—was the unconscious means of Sheridan's undoing. The policeman accused him of nailing a threatening notice on the gate of a certain man, and swore that he had seen the crime. Under cross-examination it was proved that it was physically impossible for the witness to have seen the act from the place he said he occupied. The prisoner was discharged. The incident started an inquiry, and it was proved that in at least three previous cases innocent men had suffered. Daniel McGoohan was convicted in Sligo in 1897 of the cowardly crime of maiming cattle. This trial, by the way, illustrates the tactics of the government when the Coercion Act is not operative. A regular panel of jurors was summoned, but no fewer than sixty of them were ordered to "stand aside" by the Crown Prosecutor. No reason was given. The government simply took this means of getting a jury that would convict. It did convict, and McGoohan was sent into penal servitude for two years.

Cornelius Bray was sentenced to three years' penal servitude on a charge of burning a hayrick.

Patrick Murphy got six months at hard labor on the charge of maliciously killing a donkey.

Every one of these crimes was committed by policemen, who deliberately swore away the liberties of innocent men. The government was forced to act. McGoohan was released, and received \$500 as compensation for his sufferings. Bray was freed, but soon died, and his mother receives a pension of \$2.50 a week. Murphy was restored to his family and accepted \$125 damages.

The same police force is as active to-day in suppressing free speech, gagging the press and swearing men into prison on charges of "intimidation" in political speeches. Does the record contain much to make loyalty an obligation on the Irish people? These are the tactics which T. W. Russell has said "drive Irishmen to frenzy" and make loyalists like him hide their heads in shame.

But the injustice is not always so serious. The stupidity of some of the governing class leads them into acts which cannot accomplish any good to any one, and seem designed only to exasperate needlessly the citizens of the country. I came across such a case when visiting the County Mayo court

house at Castlebar recently. The County Council announced a meeting of the body to transact regular business. Incidentally, it was proposed to present to William O'Brien addresses of commendation. Now, the court house was built, of course, and is maintained by the public funds, and the members of the County Council are elected by the people who pay the taxes. Under the circumstances, it would seem that the Council might transact any lawful business in their chamber. But under an old statute, which was incorporated in the Local Government Act, the actual custody of the court house is vested in the High Sheriff of the county. This official in Mayo is Sheriff Bingham, a son of Lord Lucan, one of the great landlords. From him the secretary received the following remarkable letter:

"July 30, 1902.

"Sir: I see by the papers that a meeting of the Mayo County Council is to be held in the court house at Castlebar on Saturday, August 2, for the purpose of presenting an address to Mr. William O'Brien, M. P. As from information I have received, I have come to the conclusion that this meeting will partake of the nature of a political demonstration, I feel it my duty to write and inform you that such would be an improper and illegal use of the court house.

"Being, as High Sheriff, responsible for the custody and control of the building, I write, therefore, to give you notice that I am unable to permit its use for any such purpose. I remain,

"Yours faithfully,

"BINGHAM, High Sheriff."

On the day announced for the meeting, sixty policemen, carrying rifles, took possession of the chamber of the duly elected County Council. This armed force prevented the meeting of the people's representatives in the building supported by their taxes.

Yet the police cannot always be accused of activity. When I first called upon T. W. Russell, M. P., in Dublin, he was under the care of a doctor, having been assaulted by an Anti-Home Rule mob in Dromore, County Down, although he is an Anti-Home Ruler himself. The story of his adventure will illustrate how the police, so vigilant in suppressing the liberties of the people, deal with real crime.

Mr. Russell addressed a meeting of Ulster farmers on November 19 regarding the land problem. Information reached him in advance that men had been hired to break up the gathering, and he requested the aid of the police in pre-

serving order. No attention was paid to this. The meeting began early in the evening. As soon as Mr. Russell rose to speak gangs of rowdies surrounded the building, making deafening noises with drums. Nevertheless, the meeting was continued to the end. When Mr. Russell and his friends left the hall they found the street filled with a rioting mob. They took refuge in a store, but rather than expose the shopkeeper to violence they left a few moments later. Mr. Russell was lifted into a wagon, and the driver tried to force his way through the mob. Stones and bricks showered upon them, and Mr. Russell was knocked senseless. There were a score of policemen within sight of the disturbance, but only one of them made any attempt to protect the assaulted men.

It is indeed a pity that the Irish people are not loyal and do not subscribe with enthusiasm to English rule. But some explanation of their attitude may be found in the fact that about the only visible representatives of government in the country are courts which throttle liberty and a police force which is used as an instrument of the most vindictive oppression.

# THE LAND PROBLEM SOLVED

## XIII

### \* AFTER SEVEN YEARS

Seven years ago the Philadelphia North American sent a correspondent to Ireland to report upon the social, industrial and political conditions which at that time made the century-old "Irish question" an acute problem. To investigate the matter at close range—first for the benefit of the people of Ireland and their kin in America, but more particularly for the enlightenment of the American public as a whole—the newspaper sent a reporter to the scene. For more than a month the writer traveled in Ireland. He visited cities, towns, villages and hamlets, and penetrated into the sparsely settled country districts. He interviewed priests and peasants, business men, politicians, artisans. He talked with merchants behind the counter, farmers in the furrow, women at the spinning wheel, laborers on the roadside. He was in stores and churches, in homes of plenty and abodes of want. He saw that amazing problem of the land, the Nemesis of statesmen, the scourge of a people, unroll before him as he traversed the green but desolated island. He found patriotism a crime, free speech a prison offense. He saw members of Parliament in jail, and talked to respected merchants whose

\*This chapter was written in Dublin in July, 1909.



hands were scarred with the degrading labor of the prison yard. He traveled over scores of miles of fertile land which knew no life except scattered herds of rough Irish cattle and their silent keepers, and within an hour of such scenes found crowded humanity living on stony hillsides, slaving, suffering, slowly dying.

It was a ghastly picture—not, of course, typical of Ireland as a whole, but typical of a great part of the land. There were huge tracts of the country where peace and plenty have shed their blessings for many years, and where, as a result, despairing revolt and savage reprisal were hardly known. But the extent of the injustice was vast. Not thousands, but hundreds of thousands of persons existed amid surroundings of unexampled misery, always struggling, always under the edge of the shadow of starvation. And all through no fault of their own. As the letters and photographs published seven years ago made plain, these people were victims of a system of oppression and economic slavery. The articles cited the testimony not alone of Irishmen, but of English statesmen, who declared that the misrule of Ireland, particularly in regard to its atrocious land system, was alone responsible for the misery of a people naturally thrifty, intelligent and peace-loving. After completing a tour of the districts where injustice and its evil results were most apparent, and after having studied conditions and their causes at first hand, the writer summed up as follows the state of affairs in Ireland in 1902:

Political—Widespread hatred and distrust of England. Peace insured by an armed garrison. A police force, paid by the people of Ireland, but controlled absolutely from London, scattered over the whole island, with judicial as well as administrative powers. "Coercion" enforced in twenty-one of the thirty-two counties, whereby free speech is suppressed, trial by jury suspended and public discussion, if displeasing to officials, results in arbitrary imprisonment. In the British Parliament the balance of power held by the Irish members, who are united in a determination to obstruct the government at every turn. In Ireland the United Irish League spreading its organization everywhere, its platform embracing the abolition of landlordism through the compulsory sale of lands and, ultimately, the establishment of national self-government.

Economic—The nation is dying by inches. Every year the population grows less. In 1800 it was 4,000,000, in 1847

nearly 9,000,000; now it is 4,456,000. Emigration is ceaseless. The young and vigorous of the race are fleeing from the island as if there were a blight. In the last fifty years 3,850,000 have fled from the land of their birth. Nowhere, save in a few restricted farming and manufacturing districts, is there a condition worthy to be called prosperity. Agriculture is the employment of eight-tenths of the population, and for hundreds of thousands of these agriculture spells destitution. Most of these exist only through contributions from relatives in America and England. In thousands upon thousands of families the men and boys must spend six months of the year in England in order to earn enough money to carry the families through the winter. In a word, the Irish in Ireland—the countless victims of the system at least—are kept alive by the Irish who have been driven to other lands.

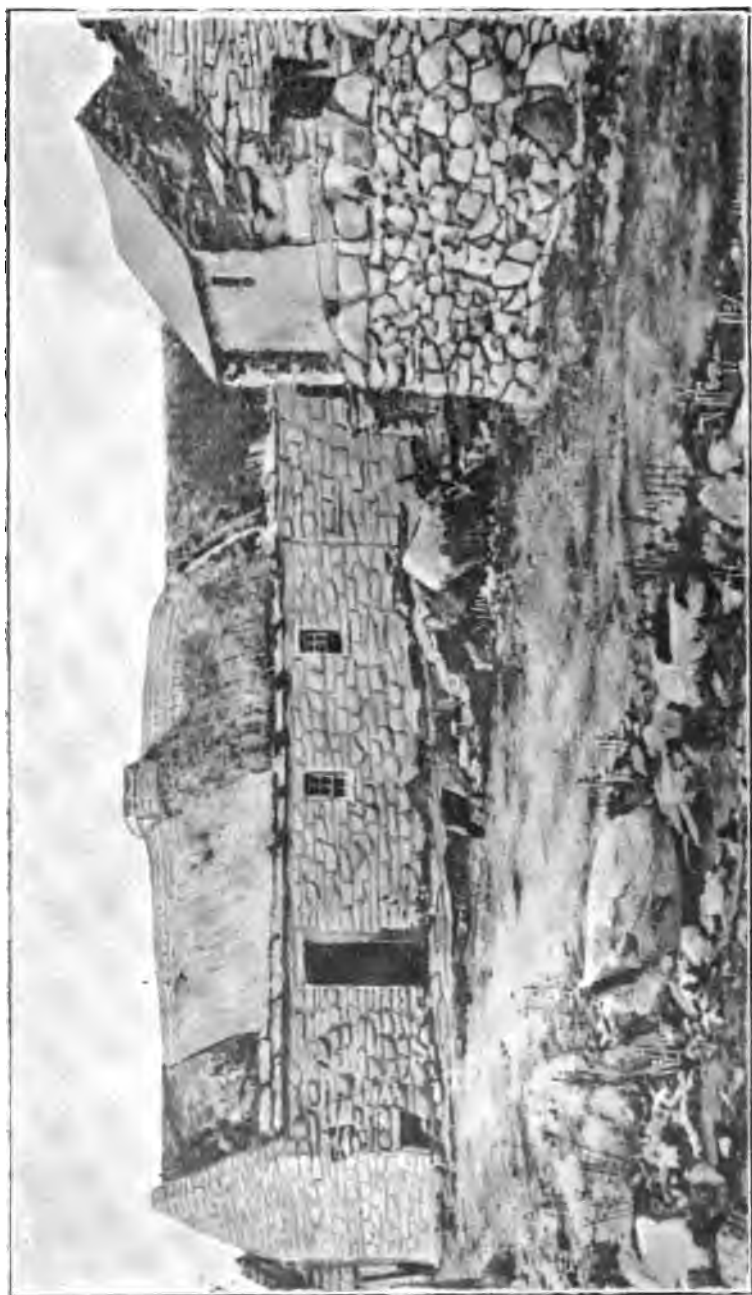
This recital of conditions was based upon personal investigation and observation, and it was proved by official reports and statistics. The causes were treated as exhaustively as the limitations of newspaper articles would permit. It was shown that conquest and confiscation had been mercilessly invoked against the Irish people until they, the natural and just owners of the land, had been reduced to economic serfdom, dependent virtually upon the charity of their masters, and usually certain to find it wanting. From historical documents it was made clear that the land was taken by force from the people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and conferred upon adventurers and titled favorites of the sovereigns. The means used were confiscation, colonization, seizure in time of war and as reprisal by the victors and, finally, penal laws, which upon religious grounds stripped most of the inhabitants of nearly every right enjoyed by citizens under free government. Out of these unnatural methods of acquiring land grew the monstrous evil of absentee landlordism, and this in turn bred new injustices. The very severity of the laws that were brought into operation against the Irish so hampered the owners living in England that they sublet their Irish estates to middlemen, who ground down the hapless peasantry at will.

An important explanation then made—one that is vital to an understanding of the problem—was the radical difference between landlordism in Ireland and landlordism in England. (See Chapter III.) In these conditions were to be found the cause of the wretched land wars, of the long,

bitter campaign against landlordism, with its record of blood and misery. In 1870 came the first ray of light in the dark record, when Gladstone established the main principle of dual ownership—that the tenant's industry created for him a certain proprietary interest in the land he tilled. The first legislation—like all that has followed it—was imperfect. The savage land war of 1879-80 showed how much of mediæval injustice still persisted. But the barriers were crumbling. Land purchase acts followed, the most notable being in 1881 and 1903, and with these the death-knell of Irish landlordism was sounded. The British government is now engaged, upon a huge scale, in buying the great estates and establishing the tenants upon small farms. The new terms, though in some cases too high, are infinitely more advantageous than the old. Tenants who paid \$50 a year rent, with no hope in the future and the certainty of an increased demand, now occupy the same ground as owners, paying the purchase price and interest at the rate of \$30 to \$35 a year.

Seven years ago it was predicted that a change was in sight. The change came, and progress has been steady ever since. Again the writer has visited Ireland to see for himself how the people are living and what measure of justice they have won. Let it be said at once that the change is nothing short of marvelous. It was a dark picture seven years ago, but that picture is fading. Seven years is a brief span in the life of a nation, and this generation will not see the last of injustice. But the reformation has begun. Thousands upon thousands of families which were suffering want are now contented and near to prosperity. Many evils have been wiped out and others are marked to go. In the succeeding articles we are to see a new Ireland—a nation once more on the upgrade.

The prediction made in 1902 that the government would be compelled to take drastic action was soon verified. Within a year the Wyndham Land Purchase Act was passed, increasing the powers of bodies engaged in undoing the wrongs of centuries, and for seven years these wise reforms have been in operation. What they have accomplished it is the purpose of the present investigation to set forth.



FAMILY MOVED FROM THIS TO HOUSE SHOWN FACING PAGE 114.



To the student of history—and, indeed, to anyone who has the faintest interest in human progress—the story of Ireland must be fascinating. Americans particularly should find it attractive, not only because so large a proportion of them have Irish blood, but because Ireland still suffers many of the disabilities against which the American colonies revolted in 1775. Ireland's afflictions under misrule and the still surviving system of bad government will be discussed later. These earlier letters are to deal chiefly with the reforms in the grotesque land system and the amazing changes for the better which have been wrought in the short period of seven years. The testimony, in the main, will be the writer's personal observation, for he will visit the same places he inspected before. But already there is evidence from a competent witness—a man whose inflexible opposition to English government of Ireland during his whole life gives weight to his declaration—that the country has been lifted from despair to hope. This is John Dillon, member of Parliament, scholar, historian and agitator, one of the ablest of the leaders during a stormy generation.

Mr. Dillon lives in one of those tall, grim, smoke-blackened houses which give to Dublin's old streets an appearance of ancient grandeur. More than a hundred years ago the house was occupied by a member of the Irish Parliament, the short-lived legislative assemblage which proved the justice of Home Rule but was extinguished by the infamously passed Act of Union in 1800. Many other houses in this street sheltered members of that body, and during the sessions the neighborhood was brilliant. Now the glory has departed and the mansions have settled into a decorous quietude.

There was nothing to suggest the agitator, the bitter and ruthless foe of British misgovernment, in the figure which greeted me in the dim-lit library of the old house. Nothing more unlike a militant campaigner could be imagined than the tall, thin, studious-looking man who rose up among his books and extended the courteous welcome of the well-bred Irishman. The whole appearance of the man is one of scholarly refinement. He seems to be infinitely more at home in his deep armchair than he would be in the heat of

political strife; yet he is one of the most effective, as he has been one of the most fiery and uncompromising, of the Irish orators and leaders. The book-lined walls and the tables, littered with odd volumes and papers, make appropriate surroundings for his studious, somewhat weary-looking figure. His words are those of the scholar and suggest nothing of his stormy career. When I told him I had come to Ireland to learn what progress had been made since my former visit he expressed satisfaction.

"I am very glad, indeed," he said. "America has heard much of Irish suffering and has given us such splendid support that it is gratifying that you can take back a report of much good accomplished and much more to be achieved presently. You could not have come at a more significant time. The improvement since you were here last has been simply enormous. I can say, in all seriousness, that Ireland has made more progress in the last ten years than during the previous two hundred years."

"That is a strong statement," was suggested.

"But quite true," answered Mr. Dillon, calmly. "I need hardly remind you that the wretched land system was responsible for most of the misery which the poor suffered. Successive land purchase acts are gradually restoring the worse than homeless tenants to the land, and each family so restored becomes decently prosperous, because, for the first time, there is offered a chance to make a living. But I do not refer to this broad reform alone—to the mere fact that the helpless, hopeless tenants and the evicted families are being made independent. I refer to the spirit of the people. The whole face of the land is changing, and the spirit of the people with it. The thousands who have been put in the way of making decent farms and homes have become hopeful and self-reliant instead of despairing. The wretched habitations you described seven years ago are disappearing, and in their places you will find trim, comfortable cottages. Those families who were struggling against starvation on the rocky hillsides are now cultivating fertile fields. This has had its moral as well as its material benefits. With increased opportunity and independence have sprung up, naturally, aspirations for better living. The farm animals, which,

among the very poor, used to be kept in one end of the house, are now properly housed some distance away from the home. Dooryards are cleaned up and the heaps of refuse that used to disfigure them are swept away. Stagnant pools are drained, roads and fences mended, and everywhere are seen the marks of industry and a desire for comfort and cleanliness. All these good results have followed from the simple change from tenant slavery to free ownership.

"There has been an æsthetic stimulus, too, which is hardly less important, I think, than the material regeneration from which it results. You who have seen prosperous farms do not need to be told how passionate is the Irish love of flowers. The little patch of garden in the dooryard and the climbing roses that often hide the porches are perfectly natural to the Irish country folk. Now you will see these evidences of contentment and of love for the beautiful on every hand. Families which a few years ago were so steeped in despair that they lived amid the most sordid surroundings now are not content to make a living—they must have a garden of flowers as well. Even commonplace incidents show the uplift which has come from opportunity. In many districts the outhouses are roofed with corrugated iron—a serviceable but not very picturesque material. One day a friend of mine suggested to a farmer that a coat of red paint would improve the appearance of the barn. The hint was taken, and the change added so much to the picturesqueness of the place that the idea spread. Now hundreds of the unsightly roofs have been painted a warm red, adding a touch of homelikeness to many a neighborhood."

I suggested that another improvement would be a variation here and there in the architecture of the houses which the government is building. The structures are warm and comfortable, but they are of the most austere plainness of design and of a deadly monotony in plan.

"I advocated the use of dark-red tiling for the roofs," said Mr. Dillon, "but that would cost \$20 or \$25 more for each house; so slate is used. The main thing, of course, is to house the people at all; but it is a pity that in paying its long-overdue debt civilization should crush out the artistic spirit in those whom it benefits."



"And what has been the effect of all this economic improvement," I asked, "upon the Home Rule question? It was my prediction seven years ago that the restoration of the people to the land would make self-government inevitable—would, in fact, hasten it. Is this the fact, or has the redressing of the land wrongs obscured the political issue?"

"The Home Rule sentiment is stronger than ever," answered Mr. Dillon. "It is increasing steadily. I do not mean to convey that it is a burning issue at this moment. During the land wars it was constantly at the front. It was the theme of every meeting and the inspiration of every little revolt. But the country then was really in a state of civil war. The Irish people were unarmed, but they were in constant rebellion, and the clashes between them and the military and police were in behalf of their right of self-government, just as much as the battles in the American war for independence. The country is now at peace, awaiting the outcome of promised reforms. The physical conflicts are few. But none the less the Home Rule sentiment is growing every day, and it will not be denied.

"A very subtle campaign against it was carried on some years ago by Sir Horace Plunkett when head of the Department of Agriculture. He went to the people with the plea that they drop politics—that everybody should 'get together' and build up the country agriculturally and industrially. It was a very plausible program on the surface, but unfortunately to have 'no politics' in Ireland is to be anti-Nationalist. It was perfectly absurd to talk about men leaving politics aside, for to do so is to drop the Nationalist idea. There is no question that this propaganda influenced a good many persons. Plunkett established creameries and gave other assistance in developing farm resources, and he had, for a time, the very effective argument of large patronage in the department he ruled. But when he openly attacked one of our parliamentary seats and captured it for a Unionist his pretense of non-partisanship was exploded. His propaganda has collapsed, and Home Rule is still the living issue. He used to boast that he would kill Home Rule with kindness. It was rather a clever phrase, and he did make some headway with the thoughtless. But, of course, the idea is pre-

posterous. The present system of government, cumbersome, costly and reeking with intolerable injustice, must be swept away. Ameliorating reforms are good only to a certain extent; it is worse than futile to try to cure an ulcer by painting it. We cannot build up a stable and just government upon a morass of misrule. No matter how fair the structure may be, it will collapse. Home Rule alone will make this people prosperous and contented, and anyone with an atom of sense knows it."

Before attempting to show the great advancement made in solving the Irish land problem during the last seven years it is necessary to describe briefly what the problem is and review the efforts made to settle it. Bound up as it is indissolubly with the fortunes—and misfortunes—of the Irish people, it has been kept insistently before the British government for many years, and the mass of legislation upon it demonstrates not only the vigorous activity of the Irish leaders, but a realization on the part of England that a great evil cries for remedy. That the successive statutes and their clustering amendments still have not removed all of the hoary injustices is in itself evidence that nothing short of self-government will meet Ireland's manifold demands.

I have reviewed very briefly the bases of this unique land problem, showing how the seeds of interminable wrong were sown when the land was grabbed in successive invasions, and how the crop was matured under the grotesque laws which made the landlords virtual owners of the tenants as well as of the lands they tilled. This was through the custom which empowered the landlord to raise rents as fast as the tenant improved his farm. With the threat of eviction always before him, the hapless tenant had to pay. When he could no longer meet the demands he was thrown out and all his labor of years legally confiscated by the absentee owner. This general rule, responsible for untold misery, was brought into infinitely wider operation through the terrific famine of 1847. That catastrophe spread a blight of poverty over the nation, and in addition drove countless landlords into bankruptcy. Thereupon, in an effort to do something to lift the burden of misery, Parliament established a

court empowered to sell hopelessly incumbered estates. The hope was that with a fresh start all around the problem might solve itself; but, of course, while the tenant remained without title to any part of the improvements he had made, and with no protection against capricious eviction, he was only exchanging masters, and in most cases exchanging them for the worse. There was a rush of creditors to the new court, the bankrupt estates were bought wholesale by speculators and rents were raised higher than before. Evictions by wholesale ensued. All Ireland was a place of misery and mourning. Finding rent collections impossible, the new landlords were seized with a mania for making large grazing farms, and the helpless tenants were swept off the land as ruthlessly as if they had been noxious animals. In 1849 and succeeding years, when an eviction was virtually a sentence of starvation, populous districts as large as small counties were turned into empty plains. Houses were razed, fences leveled and the little farms consolidated in huge ranches. It was at this period that the London Times, never noted for sympathy with Ireland's woes, confessed that "the name of an Irish landlord stinks in the nostrils of Christendom." In the ten years following the famine 300,000 families were thrust out of their homes and 1,500,000 victims of tyranny and spoiling fled from Ireland to America. This was the high tide in the wave of emigration, but to this day the flow has never ceased.

As early as 1845 the Devon Commission had recommended the correcting of the glaring injustice which denied to the tenant any interest in the farm he created from the bare land. But it was not until 1870 that the principle was established. Even then the remedy was ineffective. The law simply made the landlord pay for improvements when he evicted a tenant, and he could recoup himself by raising the rent to the next incumbent. Out of this grew the famous demand for "the three F's"—fair rent, free sale and fixity of tenure—which were finally won after the savage land war of 1879, in the Act of 1881. It not only established finally and irrevocably the principle of tenant partnership right, but created a court which fixed the rents to be paid during periods of fifteen years. How much of downright robbery

there was under the old system may be deduced from the fact that in the first readjustment the court reduced rents twenty per cent., taking an annual burden of \$7,500,000 from the shoulders of the people. But for more than a generation prior to this great victory the only permanent solution of the desperate problem had been under desultory discussion from time to time. In 1847 Lord John Russell advocated the proposal of John Stuart Mill for making the peasants proprietors of the lands they tilled. More than twenty years later, in 1870, a timid move was made in the direction of assisting the tenants to purchase their farms. Parnell in 1878 made a fight for the idea, and the Act of 1881 marked a certain small advance.

But the Ashbourne Act of 1885 was the first real recognition and adoption of what is known as Land Purchase. This act provided for the advancing by the state of the entire sum necessary to purchase lands, the tenants repaying it in forty-nine annual instalments of four per cent. Of this, three and one-eighth per cent. was interest and seven-eighths per cent. went to the sinking fund for liquidation of the loan. More than 25,000 tenants were able to take advantage of the plan under that act and an amending act of 1888. The principle had been established, and since 1885 has been broadened and its application made more practical. In 1886 Gladstone offered to the Irish landlords terms of purchase somewhat similar to those of the Ashbourne Act; but the plan fell with his Home Rule bill, to which it was attached.

The next important move was in 1891, when Premier Balfour authorized the appropriation of \$150,000,000 to extend the operation of the Ashbourne Act, under which expenditure had been limited to \$50,000,000. All of the purchase money was to be advanced to the tenants by the state, through the issue of guaranteed land stock bearing dividends of two and three-fourths per cent., repayment being made by an annuity at the rate of four per cent., payable in half-yearly instalments for a period of forty-nine years. Under this act no fewer than 30,000 tenants became owners of their farms—5000 more than had been able to take advantage of all the preceding acts. In 1896 another great step forward was made. The Land Act of that year

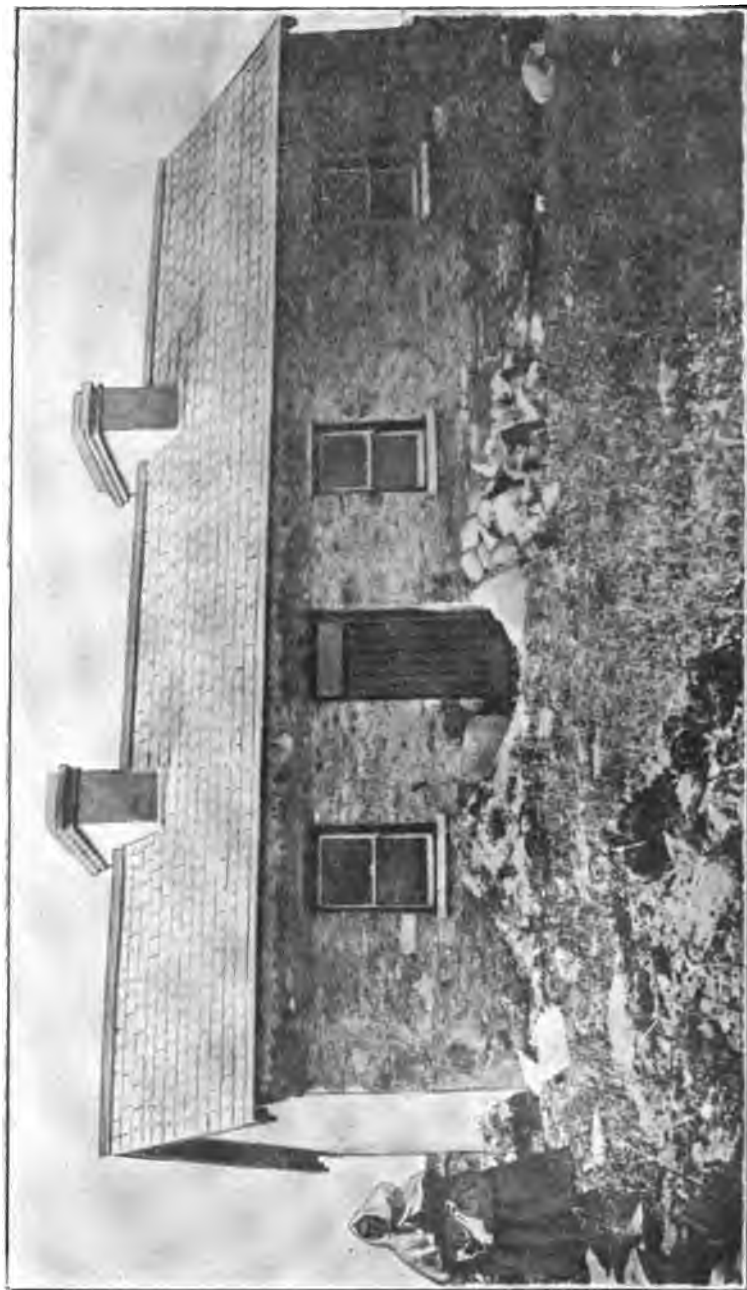
asserted the principle of compulsory sale of bankrupt estates and lengthened the term of repayment to sixty-eight years, the payments being reduced at the end of each period of ten years. This was the act in operation in 1902, when the writer visited Ireland. About 47,000 farm holdings had been transferred under it and the Act of 1891, but there were still many defects. The hardships of the great mass of tenants led to the passage of the Wyndham Act of 1903. Under this the British treasury advances up to \$800,000,000 at two and three-quarters per cent. interest, with one-half per cent. added for the sinking fund. The advances are made in cash by the Estates Commissioners, and the tenants pay three and one-quarter per cent. of the sum annually. At this rate they acquire ownership in sixty-eight and one-half years. Instead of paying, say \$50 a year rent forever, the tenant pays \$30 or \$35 annually, with the certainty that his heirs will own the property.

And what was the security—aside from the land—for this huge loan? It may interest those who decry the Irish peasantry as improvident to know. The security is the credit of the Irish tenant farmers, and what that credit is may be measured from the fact that out of more than 70,000 purchasers under previous acts, only two failed to meet their payments. The amounts received by the landlords as purchase money do not, of course, yield incomes in interest equal to the sums extorted in rents. But, on the other hand, they have security from agitation and further reductions of rent, and, in addition, a bonus of \$60,000,000 was provided to "bridge the gap" between former rents and the incomes from purchase moneys. Under this act, between November 1, 1903, and March 31, 1906, nearly 87,000 holdings passed from the ownership of landlords to the ownership of tenants. Here is the Land Purchase record for the period ending March 31, 1908:

Number of tenants who have purchased their holdings under Acts of

1870 .....	877	1891 and 1896..	47,000
1881 .....	731	1903 .....	141,940
1885 and 1888...	25,000		

Thus we see that under all the Land Purchase Acts more



NOW OCCUPIED BY FAMILY THAT LIVED IN HOUSE SHOWN FACING PAGE 106.



than 215,000 tenants have been made owners of their farms or are now in process of acquiring ownership. There are still, nevertheless, many defects in the law, but most of these will be remedied by the amending act now being pressed by the Irish Parliamentary Party upon the friendly Liberal government.\* The chief reform will be the making of sales by landlords compulsory. When tenants on an unsold estate find themselves paying rent, while their neighbors on an adjoining estate are paying less sums annually in purchase money, discontent is inevitable. This anomaly must, of course, be extinguished. All England virtually realizes now that Ireland will never be satisfied, and cannot in justice be satisfied, until the last vestige of her archaic and intolerable system of landlordism has been swept away.

Before leaving this question it may not be amiss to quote an undeniable authority for the statements made concerning the land system which is now disappearing. Pages could be filled with citations from statesmen such as Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain and Balfour, besides economists like John Stuart Mill, and various commissions whose reports cumber the parliamentary files of the last century. It will be sufficient to quote a few passages from the final report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland, dated May 5, 1908.

This commission, appointed July 20, 1906, worked zealously for nearly two years, visited every part of Ireland, inspected conditions at close range and examined hundreds of witnesses, whose testimony fills ten big volumes. The members included the Earl of Dudley, once Lord Lieutenant; Sir Anthony MacDonnell, former Under Secretary; the Most Reverend Patrick O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, and other distinguished men. The report says:

"Two questions naturally arise: First, how did districts so little capable of supporting any population at all come to be populated very thickly, as regards the productive capacity of the land; and, second, how is it that in large districts,

\*The bill passed the House of Commons in October, 1909, but was emasculated by the House of Lords by elimination of the clause making sales compulsory. This, with the lords' opposition to the budget, created a political crisis, which may lead to a general election early in 1910.



where the land is mostly good, there are very few people on the good land, but great numbers on the bad land adjoining? The main answer to both queries is to be found in the course of Irish history during the last three hundred years, though, of course, economic causes have contributed, especially during the nineteenth century. The various 'plantations' of Ireland, the acts of settlement and corporation and the substitution of English land tenure for the traditional Irish methods of landholding have profoundly affected the agrarian development of Ireland. The chief incident, however, was the Cromwellian Act of Settlement, under which most of the land-owning population implicated on the Royalist side were banished west of the Shannon. \* \* \*

"The commercial restrictions from which Ireland suffered during the eighteenth century forced the people to look for subsistence to the land, and the agrarian unrest was intensified by the penal laws (against Catholics) which prevented the greater part of the population from acquiring any beneficial interest in the land. \* \* \* Congestion and sub-division of the holdings went on until the great crash of the famine. In many cases the landlords were forced to effect clearances, either by their creditors or because of the difficulty of obtaining rents from pauper tenants. In certain districts the greater portion of the population died, and whatever may be the most potent causes of the consolidation of holdings about the time of the famine, there can be no doubt of its extent. \* \* \*

"While part of the land formerly occupied by small holdings was utilized for the creation of large grazing farms, some of it was employed for the enlargement of other small holdings. Many of the small farms swept away were uneconomic, but the sudden nature of the changes undoubtedly caused great suffering and left bitter memories. This tendency to consolidate farms was given an impetus by the Incumbered Estates Act of 1848, which replaced many of the old landlords by new men, a large number of whom, looking upon the owning of land as a purely commercial transaction, and disregarding traditional rights of the tenants, raised rents or evicted tenants and consolidated the holdings thus vacated. The rise in the price of beef led to more land being cleared

by eviction and thrown into grazing farms. On the poorer land many of the inhabitants were left undisturbed, because it was not worth while to resume possession. Many of those evicted settled on unreclaimed pieces of land in the neighborhood and added to the congestion, and some carved out new holdings for themselves on the waste land along the western littoral, and started the almost impossible task of winning a living from land incapable of itself of supporting life according to any decent standard."

Here is the whole story—confiscation, unjust land laws, congestion, starvation. To the credit of civilization, the elaborate injustice of three hundred years is now in progress of extinction. Landlordism is disappearing, and Ireland, fitted by nature to support millions in prosperity, is passing back into the ownership of her own people.

## XIV

### \*AN EVICTION .

I am going to describe an Irish eviction. It took place the day after I landed in the country to report upon the wonderful progress made during the last seven years in reforming the land laws. The scene I shall describe is quite out of harmony with the purposes of this tour, which is to show how great a change for the better has been wrought. But this eviction, a rather shocking greeting to an optimistic inquirer, demands a place in the story for the very reason that it is shocking. The scene of brutality and violence, of conflict between a stern law and a defiant people, was in itself evidence that a brighter day has dawned, because it was so unusual. I do not think there have been half a dozen forcible evictions in Ireland since 1902. When one recalls the wholesale evictions of sixty years ago and of the days of the savage land war, when families literally by thousands were dragged out of their cottage homes and flung into the ditches to starve, one realizes that this exceptional affair is a sign of hope, for its general condemnation is testimony that the barbarous custom is extinguished forever. In the present instance I shall not enter into the merits of the case which furnishes the unusual example. Indeed, from inquiries made I judge that it would be a nice decision which should say whether justice was with the landlord or the tenant. I shall, therefore, simply describe what occurred as I learned it from eye-witnesses and an inspection of the field of battle.

The scene was the farmhouse of Richard J. Walsh, near Kilmurry, a short distance from Castleisland, in the county of Kerry. As it lies only a couple of hours' drive from Killarney, quite a number of the spectators were from the shores of the beautiful lakes. Walsh and his landlord, a Dublin man, had been at odds for many months. Settlement being found impossible, there was an attempt at eviction in June,

\*This chapter was written in Killarney in July, 1909.

1909. But when the sheriff and his bailiffs arrived to serve their writ they found the place fortified, and their summons was greeted with scorn. This having been reported and renewed negotiations having proved useless, the might of the British government was invoked. The American, with his quick resentment of anything approaching militarism, may be interested to know that the subjection of this farmhouse, inhabited by one farmer and his bedridden mother, eighty-three years old, called for not only the local members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, but drafts from Kerry, Limerick and Dublin. A whole company of these armed military police, with their officers, was brought from the capital, two hundred miles away. It may be remarked that the defenders were determined to make the trip worth while. Fourteen neighbors of Walsh volunteered to garrison the house, and the defense they put up was regarded by connoisseurs in evictions as one of the ablest and most stubborn on record. Barring the facts that firearms were not used on either side and that no one was killed, the contest was as serious and as brutal as any incident of war.

The constabulary, drafted into Castleisland, were under command of Assistant Inspector General Ball, of Dublin, one of the ablest and most fearless of the officers. He moved his forces like an alert military commander. At three o'clock in the morning, in a driving rain, the sheriff, the bailiffs and their armed escort of two hundred and fifty constables marched out of Castleisland and along the winding road to Fort Walsh. Civilians interested in the row preceded and followed the military, some on foot and some in jaunting cars. On one of the vehicles that sped along the wet lanes was Joseph Murphy, M. P., who had hastened over from London in the night to witness the difficulties of one of his constituents.

It was hardly daylight, owing to the low-hanging clouds, when the attacking force approached the condemned farmhouse. But early as it was, the defenders were astir, and knots of sullen country people stood about as the big force of constables marched up. Between six and seven o'clock the church bells in surrounding villages began to ring and horns were blown. This roused the whole countryside, and

from every direction men and women came tramping through the mud to the scene of strife. The constables, drawn up in uniformed ranks, looked grim enough in the gray morning light, but the people looked grimmer still. The rain fell steadily.

It was a little after seven o'clock when the attack commenced. The deadly looking eviction paraphernalia—peaceful weapons in their proper use—had been brought along in carts. The house could be reached only by a lane overhung by huge elms. Two of these trees, a hundred yards apart, had been cut near the ground and blocked the thoroughfare with a tangle of big branches. While squads of police were detailed to surround the farm, bailiffs took big cross-cut saws and axes and began the task of cutting away the first barrier. It should be observed that only the civil authorities were employed in the attack at first. The military arm was used when the sheriff's men had confessed themselves beaten. It took a full half hour for the sweating bailiffs to cut a passage through the felled trees, admitting the vehicles. Meanwhile, Mr. Murphy, more as a matter of form than with any hope of stopping the attack, talked to Inspector Ball about Walsh's aged mother lying ill in the beleaguered house. Ball readily promised that every effort would be made to avoid harming her. Mr. Murphy tried to get a pledge that the police would merely protect the civil officers and not assist in the attack. He urged the desirability of bringing about peace, if possible.

"Please don't address me on these points," said the inspector. "I have nothing to do with negotiations. My duty is to protect the sheriff and his men. If they are resisted with violence, it becomes our duty to smash in and make arrests."

Mr. Murphy persisted, but the inspector was inflexible, and finally asked sharply that the discussion be ended. While it was in progress the bailiffs had cleared a gap which had been filled with small trees, brambles and stones, and through this the horses and carts were led into a field adjoining the house. The police, the rain dripping from their caps and the mud splashing under their feet, followed and were drawn up in squads, completely surrounding the dwelling.

It was a curious sight—an amazing sight in a time of peace in this twentieth century. In the center of the armed circle was the farmhouse, built of stone, in the ordinary cottage design. On every side it was heavily fortified with big trunks of trees, stones and brambles. Holes had been cut in the roof, and from these peered the masked faces of the defenders. There was a pause of a few minutes, besiegers and besieged regarding each other silently. Then the sheriff started work.

A horse was unhitched, a rope fastened to him and a half dozen bailiffs carried one end of the rope to the house, where they took a hitch around one of the tree trunks. A crack of the whip, a crash and a stumble, and one of the big timbers had been dragged from the fortifications. But not without casualties. As the bailiffs ran close to the house showers of boiling water and hot tar came from the openings in the roof. The luckless officers winced as the stinging shower fell on them, but did their work and got away without being disabled. In a few minutes they went at it again, working manfully under the painful bombardment from the house. One by one the trees were hauled away. As the men clambered up the barricade, compelled to stop now and then and use axes on the entangled branches, buckets appeared at the holes in the roofs and emptied their burning contents on the assailants. From time to time a real shower spurted out. The beleaguered garrison was well supplied with ammunition and with a rude sort of artillery, too. Besides hot water and tar, the defenders used dry and wet lime and drew on stores of stable refuse which they had carried into the house before the siege. They did very effective work with boiling water ejected from machines used in spraying trees.

During all this time the rain fell steadily, driven by a searching wind. The disciplined constabulary watched the amazing operations in stolid silence, but the country folk, outside the military lines, cheered whenever the attacking party was driven back temporarily. It was an exciting scene, yet a sordid one, too. The defense was stubborn, but hardly of a character to arouse enthusiasm, because the assailants had to work in the open and were forbidden by law to make any reprisal. It was an unequal contest, though, because it could

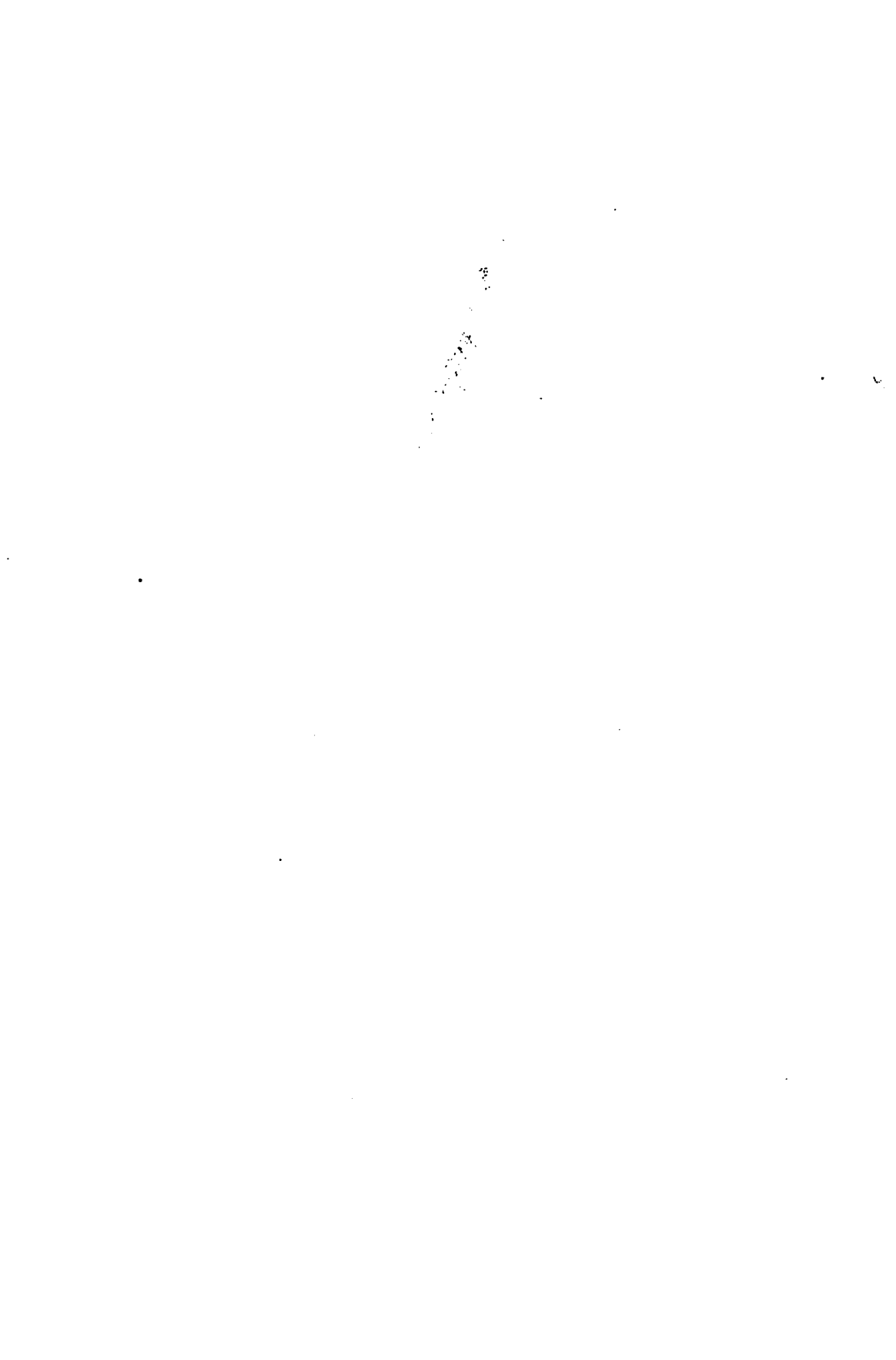
end in but one way, and there was something admirable in the savage obstinacy of the fifteen men in the house, because they knew they were condemning themselves to prison terms by their actions. Mr. Murphy again tried to persuade the authorities to withdraw, this time appealing to the sheriff. But that officer grimly said he must proceed with his duty. For more than one hour his men toiled at the barricade at the eastern end of the house before they got the gable half cleared. Then the sheriff, drawing his men beyond range of the buckets and spraying machines, read aloud the ejection decree and formally demanded surrender of the occupants of the house. Of course, no one inside heard him, and if they had the answer would have been a shout of defiance. So the attack continued. Drenched with rain and smeared with tar and lime, the bailiffs resumed the attack on the barricade, to be met by still more determined defense from within the house. Flesh and blood could hardly withstand such punishment long, and after half an hour of grueling work the men retreated, beaten back. The sheriff reported to Inspector Ball that the violence offered to his men was of such a character that he was constrained to ask for police aid.

There was a quick change. The inspector, who had been watching the battle critically, but with apparent indifference, stiffened into a combatant. Sharp orders rang out, the ranks of the constabulary broke, men darted hither and thither, each intent on his duty, and within five minutes the serious business of reducing the stronghold began. This time something had to give way, and obviously it would not be the constabulary. Some of them ran forward with a long ladder, which was flung with a crash against the eaves. Men ran up the rungs, shielding their faces as best they could from the deadly shower of water and tar and lime, and, clinging to the ladder desperately, brandished iron rods wound with barbed wire over the apertures in the roof and wall. This, of course, was to keep the besieged men back from the openings. But the ruse was not effective against the well-handled buckets and spraying machines. From the openings still came streams of material, and the dark green uniforms were soon bedaubed with the mess. While the



BATTERING RAM AT AN EVICTION IN KERRY, 1909.





men on the ladder tried to keep back the defenders their followers attacked in earnest the stone wall of the house beneath them, where the barricade of trees had been cleared away. Despite the pitiless bombardment, they hacked steadily at the wall with picks and crowbars, and slowly, very slowly, began to make an impression on the stones. The assaults from within became more savage. Relentlessly the besieged men poured out their bombardment of boiling water and tar, with streams of powdered lime and liquid plaster, until the attacking party were literally unrecognizable.

"It was a disgusting scene," declared the eye-witness who described it to me—a man whose sympathies, by the way, were with the defenders. "I have seen many an eviction in bygone days, but never one so brutal. The men inside made a gallant stand in a hopeless fight, but the men outside stood the worst punishment I ever witnessed."

The remarkable part of it was the grim good nature of the constabulary. The men went forward in relays, smiling, and came back drenched and disfigured, still smiling, even while they winced with pain and weariness. Inspector Ball took his share of the work with his men. His face was black and grimed and his uniform was a mass of tar and lime; but he stood steadily at his post, directing the attack with relentless precision. Mr. Murphy, who had declared again and again that the scene was disgraceful in an age of enlightenment, finally begged the commander to withdraw his men, if only for five minutes, that an appeal might be made to the defenders for a compromise. Inspector Ball wiped the sweat from his eyes and pointed to a paneless window.

"I cannot withdraw my men," he said, "but you may go up there and talk to the persons inside, if you wish."

This was out of the question, and the savage work went on. The constabulary persisted in the face of almost incredible punishment. One man, a sergeant, stood on a ladder for more than an hour trying to protect his comrades below. During the whole of that time he was a target for the attacks of those within, and when he was finally relieved he hardly resembled a human being. Meanwhile, a detachment of the police carried on a "flank" attack at the front of the house, if the expression will be permitted. First they dragged away

the barricade of trees, then smashed a window, all the time showered with missiles from the roof. Others formed a "sharpshooting" squad, throwing stones at the roof openings to discourage those inside at work at the apertures. This astounding scene continued until after eleven o'clock. For more than four hours the authorities had been battering at the house, and still had not captured it. The pick and crowbar men had been relieved again and again. No matter how badly mauled were the men who were called off to rest, there were always others ready to take their places.

At last the ceaseless battering at the wall began to tell. A big stone was pried loose, then another and another, and a black gap showed in the structure. The constables, under a withering attack from above, tore at the stones furiously. The gap widened and was carried downward toward the ground. Inspector Ball summoned four men. They lined up, armed with rifles, and fixed their bayonets. The inspector drew his sword and marched toward the house. The attackers fell back, and through the breach marched the commander and his squad. There was no resistance. With the opening of the breach the defenders quit. They had done their best and their worst. The rest was jail. Richard Walsh and his fourteen companions—neighbors from the Castleisland district and men from Tralee—were placed under arrest and sent, handcuffed, to Castleisland, where that afternoon they were remanded for trial.

The house, battered within and without, looked as though it had been the center of a furious battle, as indeed it had. In the center of the dwelling, placed as far as possible from the scenes of strife, lay Mrs. Walsh, not dangerously ill, but too weak to be moved. Inspector Ball gave orders that she should not be disturbed. Women neighbors came to tend her, while a bailiff remained in charge of the premises in the name of the vindicated law. All along the road to the jail the fifteen prisoners were cheered by the country folk. Whatever may have been the strict merits of the case, they were regarded as fighters for a principle. Most of them were released under \$250 personal bail, with two sureties of \$125 each. That evening a public meeting was held, Walsh and some of his fellow-defenders being

present. Mr. Murphy in a speech declared the people protested against the use of the police as members of the crowbar brigade.

"I believe Dick Walsh and his brave companions," he said, "are fighting the battle of all the tenants in Kerry in the effort he is making to obtain justice. Public opinion is stronger than the government, and public opinion is with him. He has suffered, and may suffer more, but the fight made to-day by him and his friends has sounded the death knell of forcible evictions in this county."

The ruined homestead on the day after the eviction was a sadly instructive scene. The roof was torn and battered, every window broken and a great gaping hole in the end wall. The dooryard was a sea of trampled mud, and all about lay the scarred trunks of trees, those still piled around the house being smeared with tar and lime. Inside lay the old mother of the evicted tenant, feeble in health, but obdurate as her son. Whose was the fault? Upon whom lies the blame for the awful waste and misery and the harvest of hate that must be garnered from such a sowing? Upon the merits of the individual case the courts will decide. But surely one may condemn a system in which such barbarities survive, and surely one may rejoice that in all likelihood there will never be such another scene, once so familiar, in this island.

## XV

### \*CONGESTION REMEDIED

As has been written, I talked with John Dillon, noted among the Irish leaders, of the great work which has been done for the people since I visited Ireland seven years ago. He is no mere enthusiast, this calm, studious man of affairs. His devotion to his country is as deep and his spirit as resolute as in the days when he was literally a rebel against the government and tasted the bitterness of prison for the cause. But a calmer time has come as the result of what he and his associates suffered. He sees the things for which he fought coming to pass in government policies. Instead of defying the laws he helps to make them. Instead of being a political outlaw he is a respected member of the governing system—still unreconciled to its gross defects, still waging war for the reforms which alone can revive Ireland's prosperity, a leader in the peaceful reformation which follows the turbulence of revolt. So that when I asked him how much progress had been made in the brief period he spoke with dispassionate conviction and not in exuberance.

"The whole face of the land has been changed," he said, and for an hour he described the marvelous betterments which had been wrought by the simple application of just and rational laws to the intolerable abuses of the land system.

"The whole face of the country has been changed."

It was a striking phrase—a little too striking, it might seem, to be strictly accurate. I know now that the statement was literally true. I know, because I have seen. I know, because I have traveled for days and days over the countryside which I traversed seven years ago, and have seen peace and plenty where then I saw misery and despair. The face of the land has, indeed, been changed, for there are happy homes and gardens where cattle grazed, and industry

\*This chapter was written in Castlerea, County Roscommon, in July, 1909.

and contentment where hopeless poverty held its ghastly sway. Needless to say the work is not yet done, for the vast problem covers an area of millions of acres and the lives of half a million human beings. But the start has been made, and the work of a few short years has lifted thousands from despair. The justice of the long fight has been recognized, and the Empire has been pledged to the remedy. It needs only time and money to complete the great task.

That the remedy is the substitution of peasant proprietorship for landlordism has been fully explained. For thirty years this change has been going on. Thousands of tenants—tens of thousands—have become owners of their lands by contracting to pay annuities for government loans instead of rent to landlords; and in every case the transfer has justified itself. This scheme of general land purchase is, however, so vast in extent that I shall not do more than give a summary of the results. I shall describe in detail only one part of the economic revolution—the most important part, because the suffering of the people has been the greatest; and the most picturesque and creditable, because the improvement has been of such marvelous extent.

To deal with the huge and intricate problem of land purchase there have been in existence for many years two bodies of wide powers—the Land Commission, formed in 1881, and the Estates Commissioners; formed in 1903. A third body, created to deal with the most acute conditions of distress, is the Congested Districts Board; it is the work of this body which will be more fully described. It may be taken as a fact that land purchase as a policy is going steadily forward, justified more emphatically with each passing year. The congested districts constitute a problem within a problem—a condition which demanded special and drastic treatment, aside from the application of the basic principles of land purchase. Practical recognition of the great task and practical efforts to cope with it are due to A. J. Balfour, once (Conservative) Chief Secretary for Ireland, later Prime Minister and now leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. It was when Chief Secretary that he conceived the idea of placing the poorest districts of Ireland under the management and control of a special body of nominated,

unpaid, conscientious men. They were to be endowed with large powers and made administrators of a fund to be devoted to the betterment of the condition of the people and the development of the agricultural, fishing and industrial resources of the districts most needing such aid.

The Congested Districts Board was created in 1891, and its powers have been enlarged by six supplementary acts. Further and radical expansion of these powers is proposed in the land act now under consideration in the Parliament. Wide latitude has been given to the board by the successive statutes. It can purchase untenanted lands with government funds, acting through the Land Commission. It can enlarge and rearrange holdings to the satisfaction of tenants and make them owners by agreements of purchase on the annuity plan. It can move families, where that is possible and desirable. It can build roads and fences, construct drains, open and develop uninhabited tracts, level woods, deepen and divert rivers, advance funds for individual improvements. And it can erect comfortable, sanitary dwellings for the helpless occupants of hovels, and start families steeped in poverty upon the road to self-respecting, self-sustaining industry and comfort. All this the board can do, and all this it has done and is doing to the extent of the funds at its disposal. Already it has to its credit amazing accomplishments, and inquiry makes it clear that the passage of the present land act will enable the board to solve completely the vast, intricate and distressing problem of the most unfortunate part of Ireland.

To understand clearly the nature of the work and the almost incredibly sunken condition of the people whom it is sought to rescue, the reader must learn the character and extent of the congested districts. The framers of the Act of 1891 had first to define the area with which the proposed board should be empowered to deal. After exhaustive inquiry and various tests, it was decided that the electoral divisions—of which there are 3652 in Ireland—should be considered the unit of congestion, and that that division should be scheduled as congested where the average (annual) ratable valuation was under \$7.50; that is, where the average assessment of annual value was less than \$7.50 for each

person. [It should be noted that the taxes are levied upon annual ratable value, and not upon market value, as in America.] It was obvious, however, that there would be found a few electoral divisions in every county that would meet this test. Hence there was made a restricting provision that no division in any county should be scheduled as congested unless at least one-fifth of the total population of the county lived in congested divisions as defined.

Under these provisions, four hundred and twenty-nine electoral divisions in the counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Kerry and Cork were recorded as congested within the meaning of the act. There was a deliberate purpose here, of course, to concentrate the efforts of the board, but the restrictions obviously worked injustice. Many electoral divisions quite as poor as those scheduled were ignored because they lay in the midst of rich counties other than those named, or in the midst of prosperous districts in the eight counties referred to. Through no fault of their own, the inhabitants of such divisions have been excluded from the benefits of the board's operation. There was even the anomaly of the board's buying land outside a congested district and moving on to it families from such districts, while it was unable to give any help to families equally as poor who lived next door to the land purchased. These defects are to be remedied in the bill now pending. If it shall pass, the board will be able to operate in any part of a county in which congested districts are scheduled.

A few figures will show the enormous extent of the task which confronted the board. The four hundred and twenty-nine congested districts have a total area of 3,626,381 acres, more than one-sixth of the total area of Ireland, with a population (in 1901) of 505,723, more than one-ninth the total population, and an annual ratable valuation of about \$2,885,000, which is only one-twenty-seventh of the total valuation of Ireland. It will be observed that the population in these districts is not dense and that the word "congested" is in reality a misnomer. The term was accidentally applied, but has become official. It simply means exceptionally poor. The average annual valuation of lands in these districts is eighty four cents per acre, while the average



for all Ireland is \$2.90. Hence the trouble, as the Royal Commission on Congestion found, is not a scarcity of land, but a scarcity in these districts of any but the poorest land. Taking the total area, there is an average of about seven acres per head; but since the greater portion must be excluded as rocky hillside or untillable bog, it will be seen that there is actually a sort of congestion and that the poorer parts of these districts are, in fact, agricultural "slums." Now, Ireland is predominantly an agricultural country, but this condition is most marked in the congested districts. There nine-tenths of the population subsist, or attempt to, upon agricultural holdings, as against four-sevenths in the whole country. The impossible conditions of life may be understood when it is stated that the minimum annual valuation of a holding capable of supporting a family is \$50, while the average in the congested districts is \$30, as against \$110 for the whole of Ireland. No fewer than 74,413, or seven-eighths, of the holdings are under the danger point of \$50, while 45,138, or more than one-half of the 84,954 holdings, have an annual value of under \$20. This explains the startling fact that thousands of families in these districts have been kept alive from year to year only through remittances from relatives in America and through the annual migration of the stronger members to England and Scotland as agricultural laborers.

The causes of these fearful conditions I have already cited from official reports. They run back to the time of Elizabeth and forward to within the present generation. First were the successive "plantations" of court favorites and adventurers; then the Cromwellian campaigns and statutes, which banished the people from the fertile plains of eastern and central Ireland to the inhospitable west; then the extinction of every industry save agriculture by impossible duties and actual prohibition; then the penal laws against Roman Catholics; then the fall in the price of field crops and the rise in the price of cattle, which started a craze for grazing ranches and led to the eviction of countless thousands from the farms they had made by their own industry; then the frightful catastrophe of the famine of 1847, which doomed thousands more; then the bankruptcy of many of the old



BRINGING HOME THE TURF.



landlords and the transfer of their estates to cold-blooded speculators. Thus the remorseless evolution went on, every turn of the screws of fate driving the helpless peasantry lower and lower and staining the pages of Irish history with tales of suffering and slaughter by starvation. And the final result was the problem of the congested districts, with its half million of human units staring with dreadful accusation in the face of civilization.

Dark as was the score against British misrule for three hundred years, it must be said that Great Britain made honest, if misguided, efforts during the last quarter of the nineteenth century to pay some part of the gigantic debt. In that period \$20,000,000 was spent for the relief of chronic poverty in Ireland and \$15,000,000 more in plans to improve means of transportation. But these measures were futile to reach the deep-seated trouble. The ghastly evolution of centuries could not be remedied by such means; it required an economic revolution to undo the gigantic wrongs. That revolution began with the establishment of the principle of land purchase—making the tenants the owners of their lands—and the movement goes resistlessly onward.

In reviewing the work of the Congested Districts Board, which is gradually transforming the poorer parts of Ireland, we must bear in mind the magnitude of the task which it has undertaken—the reclamation of half a million people, scattered over 3,600,000 acres, or more than one-sixth of the area of Ireland. Countless attempts were made to solve the immense problem, but it was found at last that there was only one remedy—the creation of a peasant proprietary from the helpless tenants. Specially empowered to deal with the acute conditions in the west, the Congested Districts Board has been laboring since 1891 to effect the transformation. While the funds at first appropriated were wholly inadequate, the powers of the board as then conferred and as enlarged by subsequent acts are very wide. It was authorized to take steps toward:

First—Aiding migration or emigration from the congested districts and settling the migrants or emigrants in their new homes.

Second—Aiding and developing agriculture, forestry, the breeding of live stock and poultry, weaving, spinning, fishing (including the construction of piers and harbors and supplying fishing boats and gear, and industries connected with fishing) and any other suitable industries.

Considering the area and the population affected, this was assuredly a large order. The powers, too, are remarkable. Their operation constitutes paternalism of the most advanced character, but it is perfectly clear that nothing short of paternalism could deal with the abnormal conditions that had grown up throughout the centuries. There lay huge tracts of fertile land, utilized only for grazing purposes, while the people were crowded upon stony tracts of hillside and desolate bog. The problem was really one of redistribution. In some way enough land of decent fertility must be placed within reach of each family to insure a living by ordinary labor. But this was not all. The impossible system under which the people have struggled so long and so hopelessly had lowered the standard of living to a shocking extent. Many thousands of families in the congested districts lived amid surroundings of the direst poverty and distress. The homes had degenerated into hovels absolutely unfit for habitation, except that they gave a sort of shelter, and, furthermore, the helplessness and hopelessness of the people had bred acquiescence in customs which made comfort impossible and outbreaks of disease almost epidemic. The keeping of farm animals in the dwellings was quite common. It was easy to sneer at such habits, but when it is understood that thousands of families were kept under a roof only through remittances from America and the migratory labor of the stronger members, the wonder is that they continued to exist at all. The greater wonder is, though, the resilience these very people have exhibited with the lifting of the burden of injustice. For a week I have been traveling through the country districts I visited seven years ago, and everywhere I have seen progress, improvement, a brighter and better civilization. Just a chance—that was all that was needed. The hovels are being swept away; trim and comfortable homes dot the landscape where there were emptiness and desolation; dooryards that used to reek with

refuse are gay with flowers, and the people who were once silent with despair are cheerful, industrious and happy.

The first financial provision for the Congested Districts Board was a grant of the income of \$7,500,000, transferred from the Irish Church Surplus Fund—the surplus remaining after the government bought out the lands and tithes which the people once had to pay for the support of the Anglican Church in Ireland. This disestablishment was one of the belated acts of justice which mark the progress of Ireland in the nineteenth century. The first income, about \$205,000, was increased later, and capital grants were also made. The present annual income is about \$431,000.

One of the earliest and most successful experiments by the board was the purchase of Clare Island, off the west coast of Mayo. Here the experts learned to deal with the problems that had arisen under landlordism. Most of the land was held by the tenants under the system known as rundale, an almost infinitely complicated division and sub-division. For example, a man fifty years ago rented a few acres of ground and by arduous labor converted it into a farm. As his sons grew up and his daughters married he sublet to sons and sons-in-law small portions of his holding. As the soil varied in value, he did not rent each one a single portion, but a small part of each of half a dozen or a dozen fields. In time these divisions were sub-divided, deaths caused new adjustments and allotments, until when the board bought the island only the tenacious memories of the inhabitants could decide the boundaries of each man's holdings. And, of course, these holdings were scattered. A man who paid rent for ten acres might have it in twenty or thirty scattered patches. Many a field of a single acre was tilled in tiny plots by six or eight different tenants. This archaic system of rundale, indeed, has confronted the board in all its operations. Only by infinite patience and infinite tact have the members been able to redivide the lands in such a way as to give each tenant purchaser a compact farm. It was here that they ran counter to complex agreements and prejudices. The man who, by the labor of his hands, had created from stony ground or swamp twenty plots of fertile land could not forget the years of heart-breaking labor.

The farm offered to him in one compact area might be as large and as good as his twenty plots, but into each of those tiny patches he had poured his very life blood, and it was a bitter wrench to give them up. To allay these suspicions and prejudices and to satisfy the passionate longing of the people for their own lands have been the most delicate and difficult of the board's duties.

Clare Island, then, was bought from the landlord for \$25,000. There was not a fence on the island, and the cattle and sheep, pastured in common, had to be kept out of the tilled lands by watchers. Moreover, the tilled ground, as I have explained, was divided into tiny, scattered patches, held under agreements and sub-agreements in bewildering confusion. The board's first act was to build a seven-mile wall clear across the island, separating the grazing land from the tillage land. This wall cost \$8000. Then the tillage land was thrown into a pool, as it were, and divided afresh among the tenants, each man receiving in one section an equivalent for the scattered patches he had held before. More than fifty miles of fences, running from the main dividing wall to the sea, were constructed, marking plainly the boundaries of each man's farm. In all, the board spent more on these improvements than it had paid for the land. Yet it lost only a comparatively trifling amount. It resold the land for \$50,000 to the tenants, who contracted to pay annuities of three and one-fourth per cent., this covering the interest on the loan and creating a sinking fund that wipes out the debt in about sixty-eight years.

Now mark what was accomplished here. All the interminable tangle of landholding was straightened out, and each farmer received a compact piece of ground instead of a score or more of detached and scattered patches, with a consequent enormous saving in time and labor. The grazing lands were divided from the farms by a wall and the farms from each other by fences. And the occupiers paid less money annually toward purchase of their holdings than they had paid formerly in rent. Was it worth while? Clare Island is not an abode of luxury, or even of prosperity, as the American farmer understands it. But it has been transformed from an abode of bleak misery to a self-supporting

and self-respecting community. In the old days the people were so desperately poor that they were forced literally to defy the laws. A writ for debt was utterly useless, because no one but the inhabitants knew who owned the cattle pastured on the common, and the bailiff dared not seize the animals indiscriminately. Since the readjustment and the change from tenancy to ownership the people pay their just debts promptly; they are as peaceable as those in any other part of Ireland and as comfortable as the inhabitants of such an inhospitable land can be. They must still struggle to live decently, but at least the rewards of their labor go to themselves and not to a rapacious absentee landlord.

The French estate had been purchased and dealt with before, and the Leonard estate was taken over later. These three properties totaled 6690 acres. Several others were added in 1897 and 1898, but it was the purchase of the huge Dillon estate in 1899 which marked the end of small experiments and the inauguration of the huge scheme of resettlement which has been in operation since my former visit to Ireland. The Dillon estate consisted of no fewer than 93,000 acres, with 4300 tenants, who paid rentals aggregating \$100,000 a year. Most of the land was poor and most of the farms were "uneconomic"—that is, they did not yield a sufficient return to maintain the occupiers at a decent standard of living. Yet even this great task was performed without loss to the board and to the infinite benefit of the people. The total purchase price was \$1,625,000, and \$350,000 was expended on improvements. Nevertheless, the 4300 tenants were provided with greatly improved holdings, and the annuities they pay are about forty per cent. less than their former rents, while the board recovered not only the amount paid to the landlord, but the cost of improvements as well.

Unfortunately, there was little untenanted land in the neighborhood of the estate, and only a few of the tenants could be moved. But by the building of roads and fences and the construction of extensive drainage works the direct value and fertility of the land were so greatly enhanced that the condition of all the tenants was vastly improved. Probably one-half the farms are still uneconomic, but one-half



of these will gradually be made economic within a few years by better agricultural treatment. Meanwhile, the Dillon estate tenants are virtually owners of their lands, and are "as happy," as one of them said to me seven years ago, "as a choir of angels." One of the most important improvements, of course, has been the erection of some hundreds of neat, comfortable homes in place of the wretched houses formerly used. Prior to the passage of the Land Act of 1903 the board purchased forty-six estates, with a total area of about 175,000 acres and tenants numbering more than 6500. The total purchase price was about \$2,850,000, and \$850,000 was expended in improvements. [The board paid for purchased lands out of advances made by the Land Commission. As each holding was resold to a tenant the commission wrote off a corresponding part of the debt.] On all these huge undertakings the board's loss was \$195,000.

The Act of 1903 marked a new stage in the work. It not only increased the financial provision, but gave the board a freer hand in buying untenanted lands and migrating families from congested districts. But it had numerous defects, and these the Irish Parliamentary Party seeks to remedy in the bill now pending.

Meanwhile, we may consider briefly what the Congested Districts Board has accomplished in other directions than the purchase and improvement and resale of estates. An enormous work has been done in stimulating better methods of agriculture, in improving the fishing industry on the west coast and in fostering manufacturing of various kinds. In fact, during the earlier years of the board's operations agricultural development was regarded as the most important branch of the work, and until the task was transferred to the recently formed Department of Agriculture, in 1904, most of the board's income was spent in various schemes for the betterment of agricultural and stock-raising methods. Object lessons were given to inform the people wherein they might improve their tilling. Experimental farms were established and instructors appointed to spread the knowledge of scientific farming and the principles of breeding. Stallions and bulls of high class were placed at the disposal of farmers, and special encouragement was

given for improvements in the breeding of sheep, swine and poultry. The expenditures were quite heavy—\$110,000 on instruction, \$300,000 on horse breeding, \$110,000 on cattle breeding, \$25,000 on sheep and swine, \$35,000 on poultry, etc. Not all of the schemes were successful. Indeed, it became apparent in time that such work was of doubtful value, while the intolerable land system remained to rob the farmer of hope and ambition. With the increase in the number of tenants who have become owners, the development schemes have been of more practical use and permanent benefits have accrued. In all, the board spent more than \$700,000 in agricultural work between 1891 and 1904.

Another highly important and more generally successful work has been the development of the fisheries of the west coast. Through various causes this great industry, especially on the west and northwest coasts, had greatly declined, and heroic methods have been employed to revive it, since in those districts it constitutes an element in the support of the inhabitants of the congested districts. The board has constructed new or improved piers, slips and other harbor facilities in one hundred and forty-eight different places, most of the works being for the benefit of the fisheries and some for facilitating other trades, such as the export of turf or the landing of seaweed for manure. Other methods of encouragement adopted were the making of loans for the purchase of boats, nets and fishing gear; the supplying of boats on the share system; instruction in fishing and the care of nets; the promotion of boat building and barrel building and the development of marketing facilities. Thus it will be seen that the task confronting the authorities was virtually the re-creation of an almost vanished industry; but huge as the task was, it was attacked with vigor. The policy is, frankly, paternalism, but it is of an intelligent and business-like character. The board bought vast quantities of fish all along the coasts of Donegal, Mayo and Galway and shipped some of it cured and some fresh. When the industry was no longer an "infant" the board withdrew from the work, but there are now sixty private firms engaged in fish-curing on the Donegal coast alone. In 1893 the autumn and winter herring catch off Donegal was valued at

\$5000; twelve years later it was \$200,000. Most of the fish are cured, as the transportation facilities for fresh fish are inadequate. Donegal herrings usually bring top prices in Germany, Russia and America. In all, the board has expended upon the fisheries development plans more than half a million dollars, in addition to \$320,000 for harbor improvements. The results have justified the expenditure.

A still more discouraging problem faced the board in its efforts to stimulate other industries, chiefly in the manufacturing line. The main difficulty was that manufacturing—and, indeed, any industry except agriculture, fishing and a small amount of quarrying—was non-existent in the congested districts. There were no plants, no skilled factory workers. It was necessary to begin at the beginning. What “manufacturing” there was was in the way of home industries—embroidery, shirt-making, knitting, spinning, lace-making and the weaving of homespun. One of the most picturesque and successful works assisted by the board was the Foxford Woolen Mills, started by the Sisters of Charity. A loan of \$35,000 was made, to be repaid in eighteen years—and the whole debt has been liquidated. A \$6000 mill-race was constructed for the factory, and in the earlier years \$40,000 was paid in subsidies for the training of workers. The factory employs one hundred and fifty hands, with annual wages of more than \$25,000. A technical school is maintained for instruction in manufacture of woolen goods, hosiery and ready-made clothing and in domestic training. Grants were also made to a hosiery mill in Ballaghaderreen and to four carpet factories in Donegal.

The encouragement of homespun weaving has been an interesting and important feature of the work. Irish homespun is noted the world over, and the board's assistance in the teaching of experts, in the grading of webs and in grants for the improvement of looms, spinning wheels and dyeing has greatly enhanced the value and reputation of the product. Lace-making is a “cottage industry” in Ireland, with which many Americans are indirectly familiar. The beautiful products in applique and crochet which are found in the big American stores are made chiefly in the peasants' homes and in convents, where classes are conducted for teaching



**HENRY DORAN, CHIEF LAND INSPECTOR, CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.**



**FOREMAN SHOWING REPORT TO MR. DORAN (at right).**



girls the art. The Congested Districts Board has spent large sums in developing this industry, but the returns have been highly satisfactory. In poor districts the board has built or rented suitable class rooms, pays the women instructors and assists in marketing the lace in Dublin, Belfast, London and elsewhere. More than seventy such classes are now maintained, and the annual product averages \$100,000, about one-fifth of the value of all the lace produced in Ireland. As much as \$10,000 has been earned in a year by the girls of a single class. I visited one of the classes in the fine school Father Denis O'Hara, a member of the board, established in his parish of Kiltimagh, County Mayo. Twenty or thirty girls, from thirteen to twenty years old, sat in a cheerful room, working busily under the eye of a young woman. Some were beginners, and had first to train their unaccustomed fingers to the delicate work by experimental stitches. Others, after long training, were producing the dainty, filmy articles such as the teacher proudly showed us in the finished state. Each of these girls will in time be an efficient worker, able to make a welcome addition to the family income through her skill with the needle. Cooking, laundering and domestic economy constitute another branch of education which is fostered, particularly in Donegal. The board employs six teachers, and by a four months' course fits those young women who seek domestic service to earn higher wages than they could earn if inexperienced in the mysteries of household work.

But the scheme of improvement which perhaps has the greatest effect, and which certainly produces the most noticeable change for the better, is the system of encouraging the inhabitants of the poorer congested districts to make permanent improvement in their farms, buildings and surroundings, by means of small grants of money administered through local committees. These bodies are known as parish committees; they are made up of clergymen of all denominations, the poor law guardians and the landlords or their agents, all of these being members *ex-officio*, and six additional members elected by the ratepayers of each parish. To each committee the board grants a sum varying from \$250 to \$500, and then invites the occupiers of the poorer

farms to state what improvements they will make if help is given to them. Enormous benefits have been produced through comparatively small outlay in this direction. The principal works are the erection of decent habitations in place of unsanitary dwellings and of adequate stables and other outbuildings; the making of roads, fences, drains, etc. It must be understood that the money aid given is small, covering only such materials as the occupier could not afford to buy. All the necessary labor must be supplied by the man himself. The good comes from the encouragement and supervision more than from the financial help. The people want to improve their surroundings, and need only a helping hand. That the plan is productive of immense good is shown by the fact that while the board has expended about \$300,000 upon it, the permanent improvements made have a value of at least \$1,500,000. In a single year three hundred new houses have been erected and 2200 unfit dwellings made sanitary and comfortable.

An important feature of this work is the raising of the standard of living. Financial aid is strictly contingent upon the improvement of the surroundings of the house by the occupier. He must remove the stable refuse a specified distance from the dwelling and must turn the cattle out of it if they have been sheltered there. Thus the trifling help changes for the better not only the farm equipment, but the whole manner of living. Hundreds of homes which helpless poverty made unsightly and unsanitary have in this way been transformed into homes as pretty and comfortable as will be found in the most prosperous rural communities of America.

But back of all these ameliorative works there remain results of the main problem—tenants paying rents they cannot afford because certain landlords refuse to be bound by the land purchase plan. Therefore the British government—or the Liberal Party, which is now in power—has decided to apply the final remedy—the only remedy—for the deadly land disease which so long kept the people of Ireland in economic slavery. The first successful step in the treatment, taken after several generations of agitation, was the establishment of the tenant's right to a certain ownership in the

improvements made by his own labor. The second was the establishment of the principle of land purchase, by which the tenants are being made actual owners of their lands. Now comes the last move—compulsion.

To effect a complete and permanent cure a vigorous dose is needed, and the country is going to get it. It may be called an allopathic dose of a homœopathic remedy. Compulsion—by fire and sword and the dreadful enactments of greed and prejudice and race hatred—drove the people from the lands they had occupied. Compulsion—by carefully and justly framed statutes—is to restore them to their own.

Lack of the power to compel final and complete settlement of the land problem has been the chief weakness of legislation heretofore. The principle of land purchase and the urgent necessity for it were advanced more than sixty years ago, and through successive statutes, won by arduous agitation in and out of Parliament, the principle has been made widely effective. The hundreds of prosperous farms I have seen during this tour, where seven years ago I saw empty plains, testify eloquently to the success of the plan. But most of these improvements have been made through consent of the landlords. It has been possible for the Estates Commissioners and the Congested Districts Board to purchase many lands and resell them to the tenants because the landlords—whether through good nature or want of funds or sheer weariness with the endless struggle against public opinion—have agreed to dispose of their huge holdings to the authorities. There have been, however, and are still many landlords who remain obdurate. They are rich, and money does not tempt them; they are prejudiced, and argument does not move them; or they are rapacious, and fair offers do not satisfy them. Hence they cling to their broad acres of fertile land, while all around them, or, at least, within a few miles of their domains, land-hungry peasants wear out their lives in a hopeless fight with poverty.

The land bill now in Parliament—presented by the Liberal government after consultation with the Irish Parliamentary Party—proposes to apply the obvious remedy, compulsory sale. This measure, dealing with a problem so vast



and complex as the Irish land question, is necessarily complex itself; but its main intent is to enlarge the powers and increase the effectiveness of the authorities engaged in transferring the land from the landlords to the tenant proprietors. We shall discuss only its bearings upon the work of the Congested Districts Board.

Besides the inability to enforce sales of big estates, the board has been hampered by the fact that its powers were restricted to the congested districts in each county and that it could not operate to the fullest extent outside of such districts. Thus, while it could purchase an estate offered to it outside a scheduled district, it could do so only to move to that land inhabitants of a scheduled district. It could do nothing to assist occupiers living near the purchased tract, though they might be poorer in fact than the migrated families. The unit of congestion, it will be remembered, was the electoral division and the measure of congestion the average ratable valuation. The very poor families outside a district which met the test of congestion were excluded from the benefits of land purchase because the high value of the lands around them kept up the total valuation. Hence such families might see others, no poorer than themselves, brought from a distance and planted on good lands at their very doors, while they, residents of the locality, could not be helped at all. This defect the new land bill proposes to remedy by making the county, instead of the electoral division, the unit. Thus the Congested Districts Board will have power to operate in any and all parts of the nine counties in which there are congested districts. Cork is an exception, it being provided that the four rural districts of Bantry, Castletown, Schull and Skibbereen shall together be regarded as a congested districts county.

The advantage of this change will be enormous. It will bring within the complete operation of the board large areas of grazing land in the various counties; will wipe out the artificial boundaries between congested and technically uncongested areas, and enable the board to deal with bad conditions wherever it finds them. And, of course, the granting of compulsory powers is vital to a successful working of the plan. Under the bill the Congested Districts

Board will have the right to purchase any large estate, tenanted or untenanted, in any of the counties named, the price, when voluntary agreement fails, being fixed by the Land Commission after due inquiry. Moreover, the board is to be supreme in its own counties, for the bill provides that no estate in one of these counties shall be sold under the Land Purchase Acts to any person—whether the tenants or the Land Commission itself—without the consent of the board. The need for this is plain. Many tenants, in their eagerness to own land, purchased their holdings direct from the landlords, and paid too much. Also, they lost the benefit of the board's expert knowledge in rearranging farm boundaries and its improvement works in the way of roads, fences, drains, etc.

Finally, the bill increases the annual income of the board from \$431,000 to \$1,250,000, which will mean bigger projects of improvement, more well-built, comfortable homes, more happiness and prosperity for the people whom the board has in charge.

## XVI

### \* THE BRIGHTENED LAND

From Castlerea, County Roscommon, to Castlebar, the county seat of Mayo, is less than fifty miles as the crow flies. By the route which I traveled the distance is almost three times as great. Between breakfast in Castlerea and dinner in Castlebar I traveled one hundred and forty miles of country, all of it in the congested districts, where lies the most acute problem of the land. I covered, in fact, precisely the same ground as I covered seven years ago, and a great deal more. For the purposes of the comparison which I came here to make between conditions then and now, I have the record of those former observations and the evidence of my own eyes during this tour through the same territory. What has been accomplished has already been discussed in statistics and extracts from official reports. It remains now to tell the story in description of what has actually been seen.

There is no guesswork or vague theory about the results. They are written indelibly across the face of the land—peace and plenty where I had seen wretchedness and want; homes where there was desolation; men and women who had been starving in swamps or on stony hillsides now living in comfort and contentment on fertile farms that once were grazing ranches. Not all the scars of injustice have been healed. This could not be accomplished in so short a space of time. I have seen some haunts of misery as wretched as any of those which were described in 1902. But they are to disappear. All around them the work has been done. The scenes of poverty are isolated amid wide stretches of prosperity. I heard the promises given to the patient victims of adversity that their turn is soon to come; that in time they, too, will know the blessings of real homes and the inspiration of self-respecting independence.

\* Chapters XVI, XVII and XVIII were written in Castlebar, County Mayo, in July, 1909.

The tour which seven years ago was made by jaunting car was made to-day by automobile; the thirty miles were expanded to a hundred and forty. The fact has no real significance, yet in a way it is suggestive of change. On the former occasion it seemed as though a wide territory had been covered, but on this the inspection was carried a hundred miles further, not only along the main highways, but through countless side roads and little-traveled lanes. As the automobile which was used was the property of the Congested Districts Board and carried the chief officer of that body on an official tour, it had a vivid suggestion in itself of how modern aggressiveness is undoing rapidly and thoroughly the wrongs of centuries past.

That ride I took from Castlereagh with sturdy John Fitzgibbon seven years ago left so sharp an impression that the scene as we started on this second trip was quite familiar. The gray, unlovely street—the dwellers in small Irish towns have had too harsh a struggle to achieve civic beauty—looked just the same, except that the brightness of a July morning gave warmer tints than the pale sunlight of November. But the air was chill, despite the season, and as the car sped out on the eastward road, skirting the gray, ivy-covered wall of a private park, a keen wind sent masses of cloud flying across the blue and whipped the roadside ponds that gleamed after the night's rain.

My guide knew in a general way the route of the former trip I had taken, and agreed that so far as practicable we should follow it. But there was an apt coincidence in the fact that our first stop was precisely the same. There was a simple reason for this—it provided an eminence from which we could get a panoramic view of many miles of country. Curiously enough, too, at no point in the trip was there presented a more vivid picture of the changes wrought in Ireland during those few years. From that very hill one may see the story that justice has written on the surface of the land. This may suffice as an apology for quoting what was written of this scene seven years ago:

"From the top of a fairy mound, where the elves dance of a summer's night, I have seen the Problem of the Land as in a picture ten miles wide, \* \* \* mile on mile of the fairest land the

mind can conceive, rich with promise of fertility, green still to the very verge of winter, smiling, beautiful—and empty. \* \* \* Around and below us, on every side, lay the country, flooded with the pale yellow light of the winter sun. The view embraced eight or ten miles in all directions, a rolling green plain fading away into grassy hills. \* \* \* I counted ten houses within vision on that great stretch. Each had two or three acres of tilled ground. The rest was grass. The only living things in sight were tiny scattered flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Mr. Fitzgibbon translated. ●

“‘We are overlooking several estates,’ he said; ‘Balf, Irwin, Sandford, Murphy—corners of all of them are in sight. Oh, yes, there were farms here once, hundreds of them. But all the people are evicted. They emigrated to America, or moved, or died. The dozen or so farms you see are held by men with long leases. They are prosperous, though the rents are very high. The others—there was no help for them. The great clearing out started at the time of the famine fifty years ago. The people could not get enough to eat, let alone money for the landlords. Then the world demanded cattle, and the landlords decided to turn these fertile lands into grazing ranches. That doomed those who had fought their way through the famine. So they all went.’ \* \* \*

“Leaving Mullaghduhy hill, our course lay off to the southward, over low, rolling hills and long meadows. The surrounding scene was still the same. Beyond the low stone walls skirting the road lay miles of green fields, with not a sign of farm or crops. Every few miles a thatched house stood by the roadside, with a tiny patch of vegetable garden and a cluster of hayricks, brown in the sun. These were the huts of the herders. Each man had two hundred and fifty to three hundred acres under his care.

“‘That’s it,’ said Mr. Fitzgibbon, ‘the best land in Roscommon, fit to support thousands. And on land where ten families might live in decent comfort the only occupants are cattle, a man and a dog. A man and a dog! Not a crop on twenty miles of it—and the people wanting for food over yonder.’

“As we had driven along I had noticed peculiar formations in the ground here and there. Across the fields lay low ridges, sometimes two or three hundred yards long. In some places they looked like lines of grass, in others they melted into the level ground. They were grass grown. I asked what they were.

“‘The remains of walls and ditches of the old farms,’ answered Mr. Fitzgibbon. ‘You’ll find them all over these lands. When the tenants were evicted the walls were thrown down and grass grew over the places. You will see here and there a clump or row of trees. They mark where the farmhouses used to stand. The houses were leveled, and the walls that inclose the road we are now on were built of stones that once sheltered evicted tenants.’

“It was ghastly. I began to see these marks of devastation everywhere. The fields on all sides were scarred with the green ridges, as though the whip of oppression had left great welts on the surface of the land. In two or three places we came upon the crumbling ruins of houses which for some reason had not been carried away. There was one of which the four walls still stood, with the chimney, though the roof had disappeared years ago. We



TENANT PURCHASER ERECTING NEW HOME.



NOT PRETTY, BUT COMFORTABLE.



could still trace the outlines of a little garden and the remnants of a stable. A hare scampered away as I peered through a gaping hole where there had been a window."

So the story ran, as simple and accurate a description as I could write of the desolation I had seen from the top of this very mound and in a short drive from it. The scene came back vividly as I climbed the little eminence. And I looked upon it again—the same land, but so marvelously different! Leaning against the wind that came booming over leagues of rolling plain, we looked off east, north and south. It was one great farm; not one actually, but one in the rich beauty of fertility and busy cultivation. Where I had seen thousands of acres of empty grass lands, tenanted only by roaming cattle, I saw now a wide plain carpeted with fields of growing crops. Where I had counted ten houses—the meager, thatched huts of poor herders—I counted thirty, forty, fifty—one for every quarter mile as far as the eye could reach.

Good houses they were, too, standing square and trim in the sun—sturdily built of stone, gleaming with white-wash, topped with strong slate roofs. Around each house lay neatly walled fields, patches of living green in every shade—the pale shimmer of oats, the rich color of potato plants, the slaty green of cabbages. Near each dwelling was a little group of outhouses for the cattle, with a pile of brown turf against one wall. The dooryards gleamed with bright flowers.

"And all this has been done in seven years!" I said.

"Less than that," said the officer of the Congested Districts Board. "This district has been 'settled' for nearly two years. Within sight are more than 2000 acres of land, made up of parts of several estates. This tract was virtually empty. It was used, as you know, for big grazing ranches. Now you can see the homes of one hundred families. Roughly, five hundred persons have been lifted from hopeless poverty and made independent in this single section under your eye."

I looked again across the wide plain, which had been so vacant and now glowed with life. From chimneys here and there smoke was whipping in the wind. In a field a



quarter of a mile away two men were cultivating potatoes, moving down the rows with steady, rhythmic movements. Along a road jolted three carts, piled high with turf from a distant bog. At the door of a cottage near the foot of the hill stood a woman, shading her eyes with her hand as she looked after a group of children on their way to school, and down the wind came the sound of the fresh young voices, laughing and singing.

Having studied attentively some hundreds of pages of official reports bristling with statistical information, I was fairly impressed with the magnitude of the improvement made during the last seven years by the Congested Districts Board. But, after all, figures are not the most effective evidence. The sight of one trim, comfortable home where there had been a wretched hovel, or of a dozen prosperous farms where there had been empty pastures, carries more conviction than a ream of dry statistics. I accepted the official reports as a matter of course. I learned from them that so many thousand acres had been purchased from the landlords and resold to the tenants; that so many thousand families had been lifted from poverty to independence; that so many millions of dollars had been expended for estates, for road building, for drainage, for new houses and other improvements. These facts were striking, and bore sufficient testimony that the poorer districts of Ireland are benefiting by a remarkable economic revolution—the making of the helpless tenants into independent landholders. But until I stood on this hill and looked over that wide, fertile plain, dotted with the homes of nearly a hundred families, I had but faintly realized what the imposing array of figures meant. Until then I had not understood the accuracy of John Dillon's statement: "The whole face of the land has been changed."

Vivid as was the story told by this bird's-eye view, however, I wanted to learn some details. It seemed to me that in one of the houses I might find evidence more convincing than any description of conditions now as contrasted with conditions seven years ago. I made this suggestion to the officer of the Congested Districts Board who was my guide.

"Select any house in sight," he said, "and go and talk to the family."

We came down from the hill, climbed the wall and descended by a rocky lane to the plain. I chose the first house we reached. It was two stories high, built strongly of stone, with a slate roof. Plain beyond the point of severity, it had not a single hint of beauty or art to recommend it. The government has undertaken a work so vast that it has deemed it wise not to expend energy or money in producing artistic dwellings. This seems a pity, for surely there is an economic value in beauty, and the housing of the people in buildings of such forbidding plainness tends to discourage aspirations toward higher things. But this seemed a very subordinate issue when I remembered the squalor and misery in which these people were living a few short years ago. The house stood about fifty feet from the road, the "front yard" filled with growing cabbages of enormous size. We passed around one end, and at the back door were greeted cheerily by a little woman of middle age but youthful spirits. She came out, wiping her hands on her apron, beaming with welcome and smiling proudly when we asked permission to look around her place.

"Indeed, sir," she said, "I'll be glad to have you see. Sure we're not as tidy as we might be to-day, but we're comfortable, and that's much."

She walked with us to the end of the yard—it was paved with cobblestones—and showed us the stable and other outhouses. These, too, were of stone and slate roofed. At one end of the stable was a huge pile of turf, three months' supply of fuel. At the other end was a concrete pig sty.

"Where you formerly lived," I suggested, "you had no such arrangement as this? You kept the cattle in the house?"

A shadow passed over her face.

"We did, sir. We did that. But God knows it was no fault of ours. We lived as we could, and it was bad living. It was four miles from here, ten acres of hillside, that my man and I and the children had to pick the stones out of with our hands. We never had a crop that would keep food

in our stomachs for a year. Every summer my man and the big boys had to go to England and do farm work to get enough money for the rent and to carry us through the winter. Now, you see——"

She pointed at the house and then at the fields which climbed the slope. A quarter of a mile away the husband and son could be seen, up to their waists among the dark green of the potato plants, working steadily—and working, not for another, but for themselves.

"It is all different," she said, simply. "And, please God, it will stay different."

"What rent did you pay?" I asked.

"Three pounds a year. This was for ten acres of worthless land and the bit of a house—a wretched house, sir—I'm sick now to think of it."

"And now?"

"Now, sir, we have twenty-six acres of land, all of it raising good crops. We have two cows and a calf, a pig with a growing litter and forty chickens. For the house and stable and land we pay £20 a year. This is not rent, you see, sir. We're buying the whole place. We'll be land owners ourselves," and she smiled happily.

Here was a difference. This family, living in unspeakable poverty, were able to pay \$15 a year and feed themselves only by sending the stronger members to England every year. Now they were living well, in a comfortable house instead of a hovel, with plenty of good, nourishing food, and were paying \$100 a year, not for rent, but in purchase instalments.

"Are you satisfied you can pay six or seven times as much as before?" I asked. "Isn't that a big burden to assume?"

"Sure, sir, we'll do it, please God. We came well through the first year, though we lost a calf that broke its leg in a gate. 'Tis a hard struggle, but we don't look for ease. We are working for ourselves, do you see, and that makes it better."

We went into the house, passing the concrete chicken house built against the outside of the chimney, so that the fowls have the benefit of the warmth in winter. At one side

of the back entrance was a small room used as a dairy. We entered the main living room, kitchen and dining room in one. It was lighted by a large window. The concrete floor was spotlessly clean and the room held substantial furniture. On a dresser against the wall were dishes and a gleaming array of pots and pans. There was no range, but in the big fireplace a pile of turf glowed, ample for giving warmth and for cooking. In a wooden cradle of the old-fashioned "ark" shape a baby slept peacefully, a cat curled up at its feet. A tall, shy girl, barefooted, was drying dishes. Three other children played on the floor.

"Twelve children," said the mother, cheerfully. "Ah, they're a great comfort to us. The two oldest boys are on the works (employed by the Congested Districts Board on road building or drainage), the third is out in the potatoes with his father, one is away to market and three are at school."

From this living room opened another, in which the woman had made some effort to create the atmosphere of a parlor. A stairway led to the second floor, where there were three bedrooms.

As we walked out to the gate the Congested Districts officer talked encouragingly to the woman of improvements that might be made in the homestead. She assented eagerly.

"Ah, your Honor, we'll try so hard, indeed we will. But it's a struggle, with twelve children."

"But you must fight it out," was the advice. "You've got a start now, and you're doing ever so much better than before. You must try to live up to your new opportunities. The government has made this chance for you; it can do nothing more. The future is in your own hands. You must keep yourself afloat. It's sink or swim now."

"And it'll be 'swim,' your Honor," cried the little woman, heartily. "Please God, we'll make a home here that the children 'll be proud of. Sure, I don't complain of the work. When I think of that place we left, and the fine little farm we have now, it gives me heart to go on. We'll do better, and never worse, please God."

So we left her, as she turned back to her work with a prayer on her lips.

## XVII

### THINGS SEEN

In the one-hundred-and-forty-mile trip through typical sections of the congested districts the writer had every opportunity for examining at close range the remarkable work that has been done toward ameliorating the condition of the inhabitants of a large territory. Now, as seven years ago, he used not second-hand information, but the evidence of his own eyes. Then he told of poverty and helplessness and injustice which he actually witnessed; now he describes upon the same basis of ocular demonstration conditions of prosperity and comfort and hope in identically the same sections of the country. To show the extent and thoroughness of this investigation, I shall set down a brief, consecutive record of the tour I made, with the chief land inspector of the Congested Districts Board at my side to explain the meaning of every piece of work accomplished, under way or projected.

Leaving Castlerea, County Roscommon, our motor car traveled about four miles in a southeasterly direction. Reaching Mullaghduhy hill, we had a view, as already described, of several miles of land, formerly grazing ranches, upon which nearly one hundred families have been placed. These families were brought—"migrated" is the official term—distances varying from four to twenty miles. They had occupied miserable bog and hillside holdings, where even the most heart-breaking labor could not produce enough to support them. Placed on these fertile lands, in neat, comfortable houses built for them, they are paying their own way, and for the first time in their lives know the life-giving joy of independence. For it must be understood that there is no mushy philanthropy about this great eco-

conomic work. The wise men—Irishmen all—who compose the Congested Districts Board have neither the power nor the desire to pauperize these victims of the villainous old land system. A chance—that is all the tenants get when they are created land owners. It is true that certain works, which are not directly reproductive, are paid for out of the income of the board; but very nearly all of such expenditures, such as for drainage and buildings, are charged to the land as it is sold to the tenants. The cost is added to the sale price and repaid in the yearly instalments of purchase money. Besides the opportunity to make a decent living, the new land owners have the consciousness that they are receiving no gift of government charity, but by their labor under just conditions are paying for their farms, the buildings and all improvements.

Swinging to the north through the little village of Castleplunket, the car passed through good farming land to the town of Bellanagare, and a mile or so to the southeast of that point brought us to Rathnallog. Here the operations of the board were seen in a different phase. A big estate had been cut up into small farms, and upon each holding was being erected a slate-roofed house of stone, with trim outbuildings. In this one section twenty-two houses are in course of erection, some of them being almost ready for occupancy. Returning through Bellanagare, the course lay northwest to Frenchpark, through sections of the great Dillon, Murphy and de Freyne estates. These large properties were purchased several years ago by the board, and the work has created decent living conditions for several thousand families who had existed in helpless poverty.

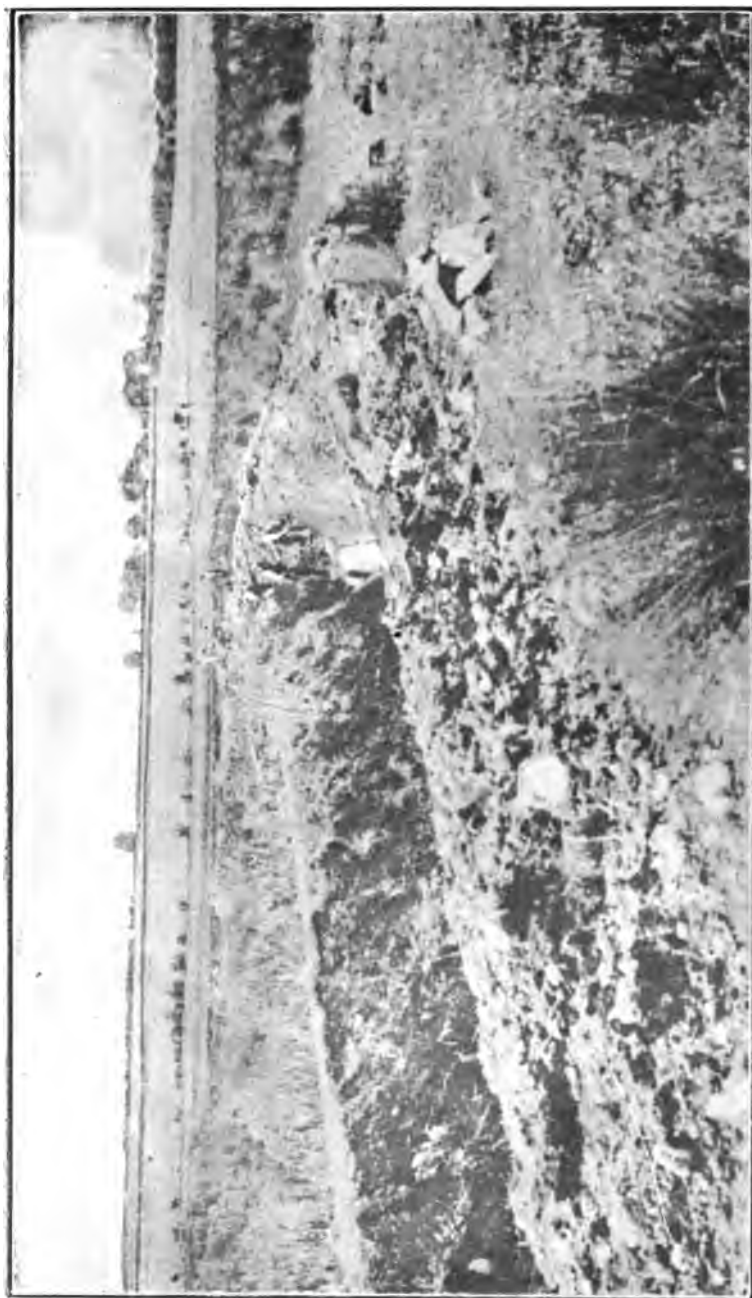
Not in every case, it must be understood, can the board confer an adequate amount of land. Congestion of population in some districts is a stern fact which cannot be overcome. But in these cases the rearrangement of scattered holdings into compact farms; the draining of wet land; the building of roads into districts lacking easy access to markets, and the assistance of holders toward improving the condition of the houses and outbuildings have worked a marvelous improvement. In passing, we may get an idea of the magnitude of the work by examining the records in

the case of the three estates just mentioned—Dillon, Murphy and de Freyne. Here are the figures:

Acreage, tenanted, at time of purchase.....	123,440
Acreage, untenanted, including bog.....	11,878
Acreage, total.....	135,318
<hr/>	
Rent that was paid annually by tenants.....	\$157,370
Number of tenants.....	5,961
Purchase price paid by board, unimproved....	\$2,712,455
Expended by board for improvements.....	\$703,090

A little northwest of Frenchpark we left the main road and ran a short distance to Callow. Here we saw a large area of grass land which in June, 1909, was divided into holdings. Within sight twenty or thirty houses were in course of erection, and scores of men and teams were busy cutting roads into the heart of the tract for the use of the farmers. Within four months every one of the houses was to be occupied. Coming back to the main road and traveling westward, we inspected a remarkable bit of engineering work on the Lung river. To drain some wet land, the board has diverted the river into a new channel. After passing Ballagherreen the course lay southwest and then west nearly to Kilkelly. Here, in the townlands of Tavraun and Glentavraun, I saw seventy-five new houses, erected during the last two years. This group constitutes another phase of the board's work, upon which I have not yet touched. The houses were not built by the board, but by the landholders themselves, under the board's direction. Only small loans were made, but the trifling assistance given had stirred the landholders to help themselves to this extent. The seventy-five houses offered eloquent testimony to the ambition and industry of the farmers when an opportunity for betterment by their own labor is offered to them.

Thence the car ran due north to Charlestown, from which place we made a circuit of ten or fifteen miles in the open country. Two interesting features presented themselves on this detour. One was the deepening of the Curry river for drainage purposes, the other a hamlet of poor houses, where the wretched conditions I saw seven years ago still exist, the board having been unable as yet to acquire decent lands for the tenants. A straight run westward



DRAINAGE WORK BY THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD.





through the Swinford district brought us to Foxford, where a notable feature is the woolen factory conducted as a successful commercial enterprise by Sisters of Charity. Climbing through the rugged mountains that surround Lough Cullen, we crossed the narrow strip of land which separates it from Lough Conn, amid scenery as wildly beautiful as can be found in all Ireland, and thence ran easily down to Castlebar.

Next morning, before starting eastward again, we made a ten-mile detour to the southwest of Castlebar to visit a colony of "migrants" who have been settled in their new places for eight or nine years. Here I saw the marvelous work of the board in full fruition. The land is poor—it was impossible to find better land in the neighborhood for those who needed it—but the people have made a brave fight for themselves, and they have won. The little farms were bright with growing crops, the houses gleaming with paint and whitewash. Few that I saw lacked beds of flowers in the dooryards, and many had climbing roses that reached the eaves. The cattle looked sleek and well fed. School houses that we passed were filled with rosy-cheeked, bare-footed children. The problem has been settled and settled right. The people got their chance, and they are living up to it. Not one has failed to make his purchase payments. Where there were poverty and wretchedness under the system of landlordism there are peace and contentment under the system of ownership.

One photograph I took in this neighborhood will illustrate the story of what the land reformation means when it is completed. The board built for a man for whom it provided a farm one of the serviceable but hopelessly plain houses. He moved into it, with his family, and cheerfully undertook to pay, in purchase instalments, six times as much annually as he had paid in rent for a stony strip of hillside. Once he was settled there, under contract to the government, supervision and advice were withdrawn. That is the invariable rule. The board is paternalism personified in its operations, but the paternalism is of a Spartan character. There is no coddling, no fussy interference or officious offers of aid. The board has a deliberate policy to let each family,

once placed on the road to self-support, work out its own economic salvation, and it is gratifying to know that in every single case I investigated the men and women concerned were perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

This man, then, with his family, found himself possessed of twenty-two acres of fairly decent land, with a section of bog from which he could cut turf for fuel; a comfortable but rather ugly house and the necessary out-buildings for a small farm. These were to be his own, upon certain yearly payments, less than the rent he had paid for a wretched hovel on the hill. He might have been content with the place as it was. It sheltered his family, and that is what a house is primarily for. During all the years they lived in the thatched hut they had never had the money or the heart to make an improvement. There was no incentive. In the new environment, however, it was different. Within two years the man had built a porch, with a window, at the front door. This alone added fifty per cent. to the attractiveness of the place. Lace curtains appeared at the windows. The frowsy front yard was plowed up and beds of flowers planted. A neat hedge was set out along the road, and climbing roses made patches of color against the walls. When I saw this place it was as trim and attractive as many a prosperous American farmhouse. Said the Congested Districts Board man:

"I am prouder of things like that, with which we have had nothing directly to do, than of any of the projects which we undertake for the people themselves. It is a great thing to build roads and fences and drains and houses; it is a greater thing to stir the ambition of helpless people and to see how their spirit expands under the sunshine of opportunity. We gave that man a chance, that's all. The house was a mere shelter when he got it—weatherproof and comfortable, but wholly lacking in beauty. You see what he has made of it—a pretty home. He has done all that himself, without even a suggestion from us. The effect upon his own family, upon his children, must be obvious. But it has its effect upon the whole neighborhood. In time every house within sight will be improved. The example is irresistible. After all, what we do, valuable as the work is, is merely prepara-

tory. We help a little, but the big thing is that we teach the people to help themselves. And it is encouraging to see how quickly and vigorously they grasp the lesson and put it into practice."

Next day a run to Kiltimagh and around the neighborhood, and thence to Claremorris, completed the tour.

In this tour of the congested districts I traversed many miles of country, almost every acre of which bears marks of the huge schemes of improvement which the Congested Districts Board is carrying out. The transfer of families from worthless land to fertile farms; the rearrangement of holdings in compact form, instead of the scattered patches resulting from many years of complicated customs of tenure; the driving of roads into inaccessible tracts; the building of drainage works, which permit the reclamation of wet lands; the erection of sanitary dwellings and out-buildings—all these enterprises combined have worked a marvelous change.

Nowhere in the world, perhaps, has there been the application of a more elaborate system of paternalism; for no other method could cope with the conditions fostered by centuries of injustice. But the paternalism has been of a highly intelligent character, and strict regulations, rigidly enforced, have made it a stimulus instead of a deterrent to individual effort and self-support. Reference has been made to the large number of new houses erected for tenants who have been made owners of new lands. This constitutes a very important part of the board's work, but it is only a part. It is gratifying to know that the transformation of this unfortunate district of Ireland is due in great measure to the ambition and energy of the people themselves, stimulated by the assistance and supervision of the board. We passed, for instance, a trim little farmhouse which was obviously a home of comfort and prosperity, and I congratulated the officer of the board upon this evidence of effective work. With far more pride than he had pointed out operations of the board itself he explained that this neat little home had been built by a man who formerly had occupied a wretched hovel.

"There was little that we could do for him," he said. "There was no land available to which he could be migrated. But we rearranged the holdings in the district and provided him with a compact farm equal in area and value to the thirty-five scattered patches that he had rented in the neighborhood. Also, we made a main drain, which gave this man and others in the district an outfall into which he could carry his own short drains, and so improve the quality of his land. As to the house, it should be understood that the board does not erect new dwellings except for migrants moved into new districts or in cases where the rearrangement of holdings makes it necessary to remove houses; then others are built for the purchasers.

"But in this case, the house being conveniently situated upon the rearranged farm, improvement or replacing of it was the duty of the holder. The board prepared the plans, made a small advance and supervised the work, and the money advanced was added to the sale price of the holding. In other words, the man will pay a small additional sum in the purchase annuity, and so in time liquidate not only the cost of the land, but of the new house and the outbuildings as well.

"The work was all done by himself and men whom he could get to work for him. Usually the board's advance covers the manufactured material necessary, such as dressed lumber, slate and hardware. The rough material, such as stone, sand, etc., as well as the labor, is supplied by the new owner."

There are, in fact, four general plans in operation, which are responsible for the astonishing improvements which have brightened the land and the lives of the people in the congested districts during the last few years. These are:

First—Erection by the board of new houses and outbuildings for migrants moved to new land, or where such work is made necessary by rearrangement of holdings. Part of the cost of improvements is added to farm's purchase price, and repaid by the tenant purchaser in small annual payments.

Second—Free grants of money by the board to parish committees, which in turn distribute the money to poor land-

holders for prizes for improvement works. These grants are not repayable.

Third—Loans and free grants by board to tenant purchasers who desire to make improvements on their holdings while the estate is in the board's hands. Loans are repayable.

Fourth—Loans to tenant purchasers owning lands which form part of estates which have passed out of the board's hands to the new owners. These are repayable.

"No means adopted by the board," said the chief official, "is likely to have such an elevating effect upon the home life of the people as the operation of these house improvement schemes. Poor landholders over a considerable area of the congested districts have eagerly availed themselves of the advantages offered. Thousands of homes which were unfit for human habitation because of their damp, cold, dirt floors and fixed windows, and because of the practice of keeping cattle in the dwellings, have been made comfortable and sanitary. Removal of the cattle from the houses and of the manure pit from close proximity to the dwelling is imperatively demanded before any assistance will be given. Slate roofs are substituted for thatch, concrete kitchen floors and board bedroom floors for the deadly dirt and movable, double-sash windows for the old immovable kind. In short, where the erection of an entirely new dwelling was not called for, or was impracticable, the old house has been quite transformed and made not only decently habitable, but really comfortable."

I have learned that under the four plans referred to above the following is the record to March 31 of this year:

	Improvements executed.	Expended by board.
Plan No. 1.....	1,348	\$498,750
Plan No. 2.....	26,983	245,320
Plan No. 3.....	7,800	366,100
Plan No. 4.....	196	13,470
Totals .....	36,327	\$1,123,640

The first plan—the erection of new buildings by the board—has already been discussed at some length in preceding chapters. The second is worth some special mention.

This is the distribution of money prizes and free grants through parish committees. After twelve years of operation this scheme has been found to yield excellent results, not merely in the actual improvements wrought in the conditions of living, but in the spirit of progress and emulation which it fosters among the people. It was aimed to give opportunities for self-help to the able-bodied men and boys of the congested districts, most of whom spend from three to eight months a year as migratory laborers in England. There is no employment for them at their homes in the winter, and it was thought that their energies might be turned during this idle period to the improvement of their homes.

Under the rules, committees for the distribution of the money grants are made up in each parish as follows: Ex-officio members are clergymen of all denominations, the dispensary medical officer, the county councilor of the district, the district councilors for the electoral division and the resident landlords, or, in their absence, their resident agents; elected members are six residents of the parish, duly elected by the taxpayers.

Having organized and obtained a grant from the board, the parish committee announces its plans and receives applications for aid in carrying out improvements. It is stipulated that the committee shall "select such projects as will, in their opinion, be productive of most good, and shall give a preference to applicants who undertake to do relatively the greatest amount of work with the least assistance." The board says:

"It is the board's opinion that these grants or prizes ought to represent but a small proportion of the value of the work done if paid for at the current rate of wages. The board aims at making these grants barely sufficient to afford a stimulus to self-help. The most urgent and important reform is the removal of cattle from the dwelling houses. The first grant that can be sanctioned in the case of any applicant who has cattle in his dwelling must be in connection with the removal of them from his house. Until this has been done no grant can be made for any other purpose."

The 26,983 projects forwarded under this plan were divided about equally between improvements to dwellings and erection or improvement of outbuildings.

Under plan No. 3 a tenant purchaser may obtain a loan, and, in some cases, a free grant, provided he carries out the improvement work while the estate is in the hands of the board. There is a free grant of \$7.50 to any tenant who will remove the cattle from his house, partition off a bedroom and put in three windows with movable sashes. For the holders of the poorer lands, free grants of from \$15 to \$25 are given toward the erection of outbuildings and \$25 to \$50 toward the erection of a dwelling. In addition, \$125 will be advanced while the work is in progress, provided the purchasing tenant agrees to add the sum to the purchase price, to be repaid in the annuity payments.

Plan No. 4 offers similar advantages to small landholders who will make improvements after the board has turned over the property. There are, however, no free grants. The board offers the following advances: For house with slate roof, \$125; house with corrugated iron roof, \$75; house with thatched roof, \$50; stable with iron roof, \$40. Loans under \$50 must be repaid in half-yearly instalments, covering principal and interest at three and one-half per cent., within ten years; larger sums may run for a period not exceeding twenty-five years.

On one section of the Dillon estate, near Kilkelly, I counted no fewer than seventy-five houses, which have been erected by small landholders, under plan No. 3, during the last two years. The permanent good accomplished by this work cannot be measured. Not only have the occupants—men, women and children—the inestimable advantage of living in healthful, comfortable surroundings, instead of amid the shocking conditions inseparable from the old system, but they have had the inspiration of lifting themselves to a higher level, and they have furnished an example of good sense, thrift and energy which will stir the emulation of the people for miles around the new homes.



## XVIII

### A REMNANT OF LANDLORDISM

This little story is in parentheses. It is a glance at the other side. Like the account of the Kerry eviction in another chapter, it is out of harmony with the series of articles, but may be valuable in giving the reader a true perspective of economic affairs in Ireland. We have been surveying the remarkable works of improvement which have been carried on during the last seven years—the transfer of tenants from worthless bog lands and stony hillsides to fertile farms; the building of roads and draining of swamp tracts; the erection of comfortable, sanitary dwellings for families migrated to decent holdings; in short, the transferring of many thousands of hapless victims of the system of landlordism into independent, self-sustaining citizens. Now we shall turn aside for a moment and look at conditions as they were and as they still exist in isolated districts, where for one reason or another the Congested Districts Board has been unable to operate. The picture is not attractive, but it is presented because it is typical of the results of the old system and because it serves to illustrate how vast is the progress that has been made. No Irishman need shrink at the recital, for the conditions are not due to any fault of the people concerned. Rather he should rejoice that these instances of helpless poverty and stifled ambition are now exceptional, and are soon to disappear under the operation of the land purchase system and the intelligent, helpful work of the Congested Districts Board.

There is no need to give the name of the hamlet. We reached it while making a detour northward of Charlestown, near the dividing line between Counties Mayo and Sligo. The country, for the most part, was agriculturally poor. Sometimes for miles the road wound across a desolate-looking bog, built up like a causeway above the flat plain of brown, soggy turf. Yet the population was, for a



FATHER O'HARA INSTRUCTING WORKMAN. MR. DORAN AT RIGHT.



rural district, noticeably dense. Here and there on the wide expanse could be seen clusters of thatched huts, with patches of green that showed where scraps of land, reclaimed from the bog after the cutting out of the peat, were forced to yield crops of potatoes and oats. There is a certain picturesqueness even about the commonplace operation of turf-cutting. The whole surface of the bog was scarred with ditches and holes. The turf, usually five or six feet in depth, is cut straight down from the surface with sharp spades, leaving smooth, perpendicular walls, at the bottom of which pools of water form. The peat, cut roughly in the form of bricks, is tossed out on the surface and then piled in regular heaps from six to eight feet high, the outside lumps being cunningly arranged so as to shed the rain and keep the interior of the piles dry. After a few weeks' exposure to the air the turf dries sufficiently to be used as fuel. It is carried to the homes in carts or in huge baskets. These creels are borne by donkeys, or often by men and women.

At the edge of one of these great bogs we came upon a small section of firm land, parts of it forbiddingly sown with rocks and other parts as forbiddingly wet. There was, however, a pasture here and there and some fairly decent cultivated land. A cluster of dreary-looking thatched houses bordered the road on either side, a dozen in all. With the officer of the Congested Districts Board, I entered eight of the houses, and talked with the persons inhabiting them. What I saw and heard pictures the life of the poorest of the people here under the old system of landlordism.

From the roadway we stepped down six inches into the first house. I never heard a satisfactory explanation of this habit of building houses below the general level, with the floor lower than the outside surface. Naturally, the system insures a flooding of the house with each heavy rain. This dwelling had a single room, lighted only by the doorway and a window with immovable sashes. There was no ceiling. The pointed roof showed on the interior the under side of the thatch, black with smoke and soot. The floor was of large flat stones, irregularly laid in the dirt. On the

hearth smoldered a pile of turf. At one side of the fireplace, in the corner, was a rough framework, immovable, which served as a bed. A dresser held a few dishes. There were two chairs. Just inside the door a calf, tethered to the wall, was drinking from a pail of milk. At the end of the room opposite the fireplace the floor was a little rougher than elsewhere, and straight across it, dividing one-third of the room from the remainder, ran a shallow open drain. This inclosed the space which in winter is occupied by two cows. A woman about sixty years old greeted us pleasantly. The conversation ran like this:

"Good evening! Will you tell me what family lives here?"

"My husband and myself. He is away in the fields now."

"How much land have you?"

"Six acres four perches. It is very poor land, sir."

"And the rent?"

"Three pounds six shillings a year."

"What else have you?"

"Two cows, this calf, a pig and some chickens."

"Do you make a comfortable living?"

"Indeed no, sir! It is a very hard struggle. Very hard! My husband goes to England three months a year or we could never get along."

"Have you any relatives in America?"

"Yes, sir; a daughter."

"Does she help you?"

"She did for some years after she went out. But she is married now and has her own family to look after."

I found this condition very frequently. The young men and women who emigrate almost invariably send remittances home from year to year—until they marry. Then they find their own burdens heavy enough.

"Well, now," said the official visitor, "don't you think it is time that you changed your mode of life? Don't you think that if the board gave you a little help you would like to have a comfortable house, with buildings outside for the cattle?"

"Indeed I do, sir," cried the woman, eagerly. "We live like this because we could not help it. We have tried so hard to get along, but in all the years we have never been able to lay by enough to put us ahead."

"Well, the board will soon take hold of this district, and it is likely that we shall be able to do something for you. But remember this: All we can do is give you a chance; your husband must help himself."

"I'm sure he will, your Honor."

"There must be no cattle in the new house. You must try to keep the place clean and neat."

"Indeed, I'll do that."

Within a year this woman and her husband will have a comfortable home, with eighteen or twenty acres of fertile land and adequate quarters for the cattle. They will never live again as they have in the past. In no single case, I am officially informed, has a family once placed on the road to a decent living reverted to the primitive methods which I saw in this little village of the old regime. We entered another house, across the road. The interior arrangement, of exactly the same character, need not be described. A white-haired old woman, barefooted, sat on a stool, throwing refuse on the dirt floor for a flock of chickens to peck at. Nearby sprawled a huge pig. The woman's story was much the same. The pig and the chickens had the run of the house because that had always been the custom.

"But do you mean to say," said the officer, with assumed incredulity, "that the pig stays in here at night?"

"Oh, yes, sir," answered the woman, simply, "but he doesn't make much noise. He's a quiet pig, sir."

Nevertheless, this woman listened eagerly to the promise of the board that presently changes would be made which would exclude the well-mannered pig from the dwelling.

Another house. Noticeably neat, this one. The stone floor swept, the table scrubbed, the dishes and pans gleaming. True, two calves lay in a corner, undergoing the process of weaning, and a setting hen with an unfriendly eye brooded over her eggs in another. Yet the place was clean and had an atmosphere of decent comfort. On the

dresser stood two mugs filled with bright wild flowers from the hedgerows.

Out of the gloom by the fireplace stepped a young girl, eighteen years old, perhaps, with a trim, lithe figure. Her bright print dress did not reach her bare ankles. Her hair, unbraided, fell in black waves over her shoulders. Her pretty face was brightened by dancing blue eyes and dazzling teeth. Her manner was as calm and courteous as if she had been conscious of a well-fitting directoire gown and was receiving her visitors in a Louis Quinze drawing room. It was so gracious that it put me at my ease. I was grateful for the feeling. It robbed our visit of a sense of intrusion which could not be absent from such an inspection of the homes of strangers. The fact that a government official was present excused the call; but this girl's frank and easy welcome made it a pleasure.

"My mother is at market," she explained, "and I am looking after the house and the children. I am very glad to see you."

"And how are you getting along?" was the official question.

"As well as may be, sir," answered the girl. "We are doing the best we can until the board helps us to do something better."

"Well, when the board does get you some land and helps your father to build a better house, with a stable and a house for the chickens, do you think you'll be able to get along better?"

"Ah, sir," with a flash of the white teeth, "you needn't be asking that. Sure I've seen some of the new houses, with their big windows and their fine concrete floors and all, and I know we'll have a home to be proud of. Father is away in England at the harvesting, and the biggest boy is working for the board in the river. They'll both be ready for the work when you can get us the new place. When will it be, sir?" she added, wistfully.

"Soon now," was the cheery answer of the government, "and you must be planning how to make your new home comfortable and pretty. You'll be able to have flowers in

your own yard then, and these calves will have a fine stable to live in instead of taking up room in the house.

"But I am sure you will make the best of your opportunities, for I see that you are keeping this house as clean and comfortable as you can."

As we turned to the door the official remarked again: "I am glad to see so pleasant a place."

The girl swept him a curtsey.

"Thank you, sir," she said. "I am entirely pleased with your company."

It was a quaint expression, and carried a very pleasant savor of graciousness and sincerity.

We went through the other houses. They differed from one another only in degree; none was wholly fit for human habitation. A year from now all will be changed. Those poor homes will be swept away, the inhabitants established in comfortable, sanitary dwellings and another colony of self-respecting, self-supporting men and women started on its way.



## XIX

### \* ONE MAN AND HIS WORK

This Irish question, which has been bothering the British empire for some hundreds of years, and is going to bother it a great deal more, is a very simple problem to some persons. I have heard it dismissed with a couple of airy sentences.

"The trouble with the Irish," I have been told more than once, "is that they would rather agitate than work. If there was more industry and less oratory over there we wouldn't hear so much of 'wrongs.' If they weren't afraid of work and would devote their energies to making a living instead of making a noise the thing would solve itself."

I have heard that easy opinion and variations of it many times. The theory that the Irish are lazy is one of those curious fables that have survived from the days when the extinction of the people was decreed on the ground that they were pagan. To those who accept the judgment it is of no consequence that the Irish race has lived through generations of ruthless persecution and a grossly unjust land system and that only by the exercise of the most desperate industry has fought off starvation. If it were feasible, I should like to take these offhand philosophers to Kiltimagh. I should like to set them down in the country round about, give them each a house, farm tools and ten acres of average land and invite them to go ahead and make a living. It is a mathematical certainty that they would starve to death, if they did not expire of despair, after a short experience of the labor that these "shiftless" Irish perform continuously and cheerfully.

The Irish peasant lazy! Let us take a drive with Father Denis O'Hara and have a look at the people who suffer because they are afraid of work. But first let us note

\*This chapter was written in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, in July, 1909.

the changes of seven years in the pastor himself. His hair is a bit whiter and there are more wrinkles around the keen, kindly eyes, but his natural vigor is not abated nor his eager, constant service decreased. The priest is still a father, indeed, to the 4500 men, women and children of his stony parish. And with the forward movement in economics and industry, visible all over the land, he, too, has advanced. Seven years ago he was the parish priest, with all the functions of counselor, educator and dispenser of justice which that office implies in the rural districts of Ireland, besides being an active patriot, an adviser of an unfriendly government and one of the administrators of the enormous work of the Congested Districts Board. He is all of these things to-day—just as devoted in religion, as enthusiastic for self-government, as untiring in his unpaid public office, as cheerful in his separation from ease. But he is a little more. He had become a promoter and engineer since I saw him last, and conducts a big river work as conscientiously and ably as any of his religious celebrations. But there was no change in the hospitality of the plain but home-like parish house.

"Welcome again," said Father O'Hara. "We have not forgotten what was written seven years ago. It brought us even closer to America—and you know that in all this parish there is hardly a single family that has not relatives across the water. If it were not for those exiles and their kind remembrance of the loved ones left behind I don't know what a good many of our people would do."

"But there has been an improvement, has there not?" I asked.

"There has, indeed," answered Father O'Hara. "I'll not show you to-day those wretched hovels on the hill where you saw the people and the cattle housed together. There are still some—the work is vast, and it is slow—but we are turning the corner, and we hope the day is coming when every family will have a decent home. You see, we were hampered in this district by the lack of really good land. Fifty years ago, and before, when the people were driven off the good lands into the bogs and up on the rocky hills, a great many died and more emigrated. But those who did not starve and could not go to America had to take what

land was left. There is no fertile land in the neighborhood which we can acquire for them, so they must do the best they can where they are.

"Nevertheless, as you have seen on the roads leading here, a great deal has been done. We have constructed many main drains through swampy land, and the holders, by their own industry, have connected short drains to these, vastly improving the quality of the land. Then the board has made free grants and small advances, assisting the landholders to erect decent dwellings and outbuildings. And a great service to the people has been the rearrangement of the scattered holdings. So far as possible, each man is provided with a compact farm, equal in area and value to the various fields and parts of fields which he cultivated under the rental system."

"I suppose," I said, "that there was a good deal of 'lost motion,' or wasted energy, in cultivating ten or a dozen scattered fields, as compared with a group of fields all adjoining?"

"Quite so," assented Father O'Hara, smiling. "But perhaps you haven't realized what I meant by 'scattered patches.'"

He turned to his desk, and then started to unroll before me a tracing of a section of his parish.

"I am going to show you," he said, "the handicap under which one man was working. I have used this map to astonish members of Parliament before this. Look, now!"

He unrolled the tracing. It was marked with the roads, hills, clumps of trees, water courses, etc., of the rural neighborhood, all accurately drawn to scale. Scattered over the paper were patches colored blue, of irregular shape and varying sizes. There seemed a great many of them, but I did not realize how many.

"This man," said Father O'Hara, "had eighteen acres and some odd perches of land, for which he paid rent. If the land had been all in one piece he could hardly have supported his family from it, for it was of poor quality. But do you know how that land was distributed? In eighty-five patches.



MAKING A FIELD: THE FIRST CROP OF STONES DUG FROM THE SOIL.



"Think of that! Eighteen acres in eighty-five patches. He had an acre here and an acre and a half there, you see. Then, two hundred yards down this road, a quarter acre. On this hill a little section of a field, here another and there another, and so on. It is a fact that often a patch of ground no bigger than a quarter acre was cultivated by six different men, each having a tiny scrap where he raised vegetables. This condition had its roots in the system of landlordism, which cared for nothing so long as the rent could be wrung from the tenants. Sub-letting was carried to an amazing degree. A man originally may have rented a compact farm, but in the process of time, through arrangement with his children and grandchildren and other relatives, the land was divided and sub-divided and transferred until the victim we see here found himself the tenant of eighty-five little patches. What this means in extra labor you can readily understand. No systematic cultivation was possible, and modern methods of agriculture were out of the question. The man and his sons wasted more time going to and from their little scraps of land, toiling up and down the hills with heavy burdens, than they were able to devote to productive labor on the soil.

"The rearrangement of these scattered holdings, so as to provide each man with a farm in one piece, as it were, has been a labor requiring infinite tact and patience. No one, I believe, would have been equal to it except Henry Doran, chief land inspector of the Congested Districts Board. He has won the absolute confidence of the people by his justice and patience. You can understand how difficult it must be to persuade each man that he will receive an equivalent in area and value of the little scraps of land he has cultivated. The proposition may look all right, but the man remembers the weary months of toil he put in reclaiming this patch and that from the bog or digging out the stones that lie thickly under the surface. When you remember the inhuman labor these people have expended to create arable land you need not wonder that they cling so passionately to the actual pieces of it which they have made with their own hands, and that they are doubtful about exchanging any one piece for any other."

We discussed further the work of the Congested Districts Board, and then Father O'Hara took me to inspect his engineering work. It was only a short ride in the automobile—out along the country roads, between the stone walls that speak so eloquently of the peasants' labor, up rocky lanes, over the hills and down into a shallow valley, where the little river glides. A deep cut was being made through the rocky soil to provide a millrace. The erection of a grist mill is the latest project to engage the attention of the priest between services.

"I have borrowed some of the money from the Board of Works," he said, "and raised some more in shilling and half-crown and five-shilling subscriptions among my people. Of course, it is easy to supply the labor. I have the people interested now. We'll put the mill here, and from all the district round about the farmers will bring the oats to be ground. My idea is not only to increase the wealth of the neighborhood by having the milling done at home, but to teach the people to provide themselves with wholesome food produced on their own holdings. They will get more money for oatmeal than for the oats as harvested, and they will have the benefit of the strengthening diet of oatmeal at trifling cost, instead of buying it and paying a profit to the manufacturer and dealer."

From the site of Father O'Hara's engineering operation I went in search of evidence that the Irish peasant is lazy. I thought I knew something of the district where, as the saying is, "the first three crops are stones," but I hadn't thoroughly mastered the facts. We covered a mile or so of rocky road, then descended from the car, crossed a quaking bog and climbed a rough hill. There was grass on it, but the surface was lumpy, the turf rising in irregular hummocks. Half way up the slope we came upon the patch of stones shown in the photograph accompanying this chapter.

"Now, there," said Father O'Hara, "is a field in process of manufacture."

"I see," I said. "All these stones were dug out of the ground and thrown here."

"Yes, they were dug out of the ground," said the priest,

"but they were not 'thrown' where you see them. They lie just as they were dug up."

Then I began to understand. These stones were not the result of work on other fields, but actually were the field. I clambered over them and made an examination. The stones, mostly round and smooth, varied in size. Some were as large as medium potatoes, others as large as footballs; some were boulders of respectable dimensions. They lay in irregular layers. I moved a patch of the stones and found more stones underneath, and still more under those. I went down more than a foot before I found earth. As I live to tell it, the soil was hidden under eighteen to twenty-four inches of stones, every one of which had been dug from that same soil. As a matter of fact, the green appearance of that hillside was a sham and delusion. A skin of turf there was, but under it two or three feet of stones, with a sprinkling of earth. And the owner of the patch had to remove this layer by the labor of his hands before he could plant a seed.

"There you are," said Father O'Hara. "I suppose in any other part of the world a man who would attempt to make an arable field out of this would be called insane. This fellow has been two years at work here, using the few months in the year when he is not working in England. Another year will see the stones removed, perhaps built into a boundary wall. As you see, up to this point he has only succeeded in prying them loose from the soil. I make it a point to urge the people to do this work, mad as the expenditure of energy may seem. I said to this man: 'If there was work for you at sixpence a day, I wouldn't tell you to do this. But if you can't earn sixpence a day, man, you can earn threepence a day for yourself by digging out these stones.' And so they do it."

And so I have some photographs to show the next person who says the Irish peasant is "lazy."



## XX

### \* EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Because of its devastating effects upon the country and the people, the passing system of Irish landlordism has always been the most prominent of the evils of misrule. There is another long-standing grievance, however, and this is the denial of decent educational facilities. That the doors so long barred by injustice and prejudice have finally been swung open constitutes one of the most important achievements of progress in the last seven years. The century-old fight of Irish patriotism, culminating during recent years in the masterly campaigns of the Irish Parliamentary Party, has won triumph at last in the establishment of the National University of Ireland—a free, untrammelled, comprehensive institution of learning, to be owned and governed absolutely by the people of Ireland themselves.

How great an advance this is can be understood only upon realization of the anomalous and intolerable conditions which have ruled in Ireland in the past. The country, it should be observed, was literally confiscated by England through successive conquests and land-grabbing invasions. And the subjugation was made permanent by the deliberate withholding of education from the people. In passing, it may be noted that even in the matter of education the national demands are inextricably associated with the great foundation demand for self-government. During all the years there has been virtually but one institution of higher learning in all Ireland; that is, an institution having the prestige and power of public endowment and support. This is Trinity College, Dublin, justly famous for its scholarship and the high attainments of its graduates, but with a record marred by the injustice of which it has been the beneficiary.

Ordinarily, religion has no proper place in dealing with national problems of education, but in this case it cannot be

\*Chapters XX and XXI were written in Dublin in August, 1909.

excluded from the discussion. Indeed, it is at the very foundation of the claims which have just been recognized by the British Parliament. Two statements of fact will set forth the issue clearly: First, four-fifths of the people of Ireland are Roman Catholics; second, Trinity College, the only institution of its kind in the country, endowed with Irish funds and grown fat upon lands taken from the people, is uncompromisingly and aggressively Protestant in its aims, its atmosphere and its regulations for the government of its members. The circumstances of its founding are vividly significant of the course it was to pursue through the centuries and upon which it continues to-day. Trinity College was established by Queen Elizabeth with the proceeds of lands confiscated from Irish monasteries and Irish Catholic citizens, and its avowed purpose was to propagate the principles of the Protestant religion. For more than one hundred years it was open only to members of the Established (Protestant Episcopal) Church. During the brief regime of the Irish Parliament, forcibly brought to an end by the Act of Union of 1800, it opened its doors to students of all denominations, but not until 1874 were removed the religious tests which barred not only Catholics, but Presbyterians, from its offices and scholarships, and it became, in theory, undenominational. Nevertheless, it is still almost wholly Episcopalian in government and wholly so in spirit.

Sir Robert Peel sought to remove the obvious evil by establishing strictly undenominational colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast. But here the pendulum swung too far the other way. Cork and Galway colleges have been failures because they were hopelessly at variance with Catholic principles of education, which insist upon some connection between secular and religious teaching. The Belfast institution has flourished because its non-religious atmosphere has been no offense to the Presbyterian conscience of the North. The refusal of the Irish people to send their sons to Trinity has been a remarkable form of protest, since it involved the rejection of the only means of higher education in the country. But when we recall that four-fifths of the population is Catholic and that Trinity maintains still the inspiration of its founding—to propagate anti-Catholicism

—the determination can be readily understood. The Protestantism of Trinity is militant. Only a few years ago a member of the governing board made this declaration:

"Trinity was founded by Protestants for Protestants and in the Protestant interest. At the present moment, with all its toleration, its liberality, its scrupulous honor, the guardian spirit is Protestant. And I say, Protestant may it evermore remain."

The sentiment may have done the distinguished speaker honor and may voice a worthy ambition, so far as the college is concerned, but such a spirit surely justifies the charge that Trinity is not and cannot be a national Irish institution. How cordial is Trinity's invitation to eighty per cent. of the people of Ireland may be gathered from a sonnet which appeared less than two years ago in the college magazine, in which the Catholic churches of the country were described as "grim monuments of cold observance, the incestuous mate of superstition."

As a remedy for this long denial of education to by far the greater part of the population, the demand of Ireland during the last century has been for a truly national university. Obviously, in a preponderatingly Catholic country this means that the institution would be Catholic in its atmosphere, else it would not be national. There has been no demand or desire for a sectarian institution. In 1897 the Catholic bishops formally declared they would accept a university which would lay no religious tests upon students, teachers, officers or governors; with a majority of the governing body laymen, and with a provision that no state funds should be employed for the promotion of religious education. As long ago as 1871 the Catholic hierarchy proposed, as a solution of the question, that the constitution of the University of Dublin should be modified "so as to admit of the establishment of a second college within it, in every respect equal to Trinity College, and conducted on purely Catholic principles." Trinity, however, was not ready to yield its supremacy, for in 1901, when a royal commission inquired into the whole educational problem, the cry of "Hands off Trinity!" was raised, and that institution—the main center of university education—was excluded from an

investigation which was to devise means for obtaining such education in the country. The commission recommended the establishment of a federal teaching university with four constituent colleges—the three existing Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast, and a new Catholic college in Dublin.

The main idea was carried out in the Irish Universities Act of August 1, 1908, establishing the National University of Ireland and the colleges at Cork, Galway and Dublin in association with it, and a second university in Belfast. While the National University will, as stated, inevitably be Catholic in spirit and atmosphere, it will be also, and chiefly, national. University and colleges will be open to members of all creeds. The act distinctly provides:

"No test whatever of religious belief shall be imposed on any person as a condition of his becoming or continuing to be a professor, lecturer, fellow, scholar, exhibitioner, graduate or student of, or of his holding any office or emolument, or exercising any privilege, in either of the universities or any constituent college; nor shall any preference be given to or advantage be withheld from any person on the ground of religious belief."

Financial provision is also made in the act. The following sums are appropriated for the purchase of site and erection of buildings:

National University of Ireland and new University College, Dublin .....	\$750,000
Queen's College, Cork.....	70,000
Queen's College, Galway.....	30,000

The parent institution is to take over the land and buildings of the Royal University in Dublin, which has been a mere examining institution, but an entire new plant must be erected. There are already good buildings in Cork and Galway, which accounts for the relatively small sums for those cities. The annual endowments are as follows:

University College, Dublin.....	\$180,000
Queen's College, Cork.....	100,000
Queen's College, Galway.....	80,000

The breadth of the curriculum is shown in the establishment of faculties in arts, philosophy and sociology, Celtic studies, science, law, medicine, engineering and archi-

ture and commerce. Naturally, in view of the ardent desire for a fostering of the national spirit, emphasis is laid upon the Celtic studies. These will include archæology, art, history, Irish language, music and philology, and Welsh and other Brythonic languages. I talked upon this university matter at some length with John Dillon, M. P., who has been one of the strongest and ablest advocates of the national university project.

"I attach enormous importance to the enterprise," he said. "After confiscation, the most powerful weapon England has wielded against us has been the denial to the Irish people of opportunities for higher education. It is to be truly a national institution, governed by and responsive to the people of Ireland—a free, self-governing university. For the first five years the senate is to be nominated by the Crown, but so nominated as to make the overwhelming majority Nationalists. After the first five years all the members of the governing bodies are to be elected. Four will be nominated by the Crown, and the others will be the chancellor, the presidents of the three constituent colleges, persons elected by the governing bodies of the colleges, elected by the student convocation, and so on—thirty-five members in all. In other words, the authorities will be wholly Irish, and that means Nationalist.

"The only complaint we have is that the endowment is insufficient, but that can be remedied. The statutory foundation of the university and its colleges is sound and satisfactory. The system will for the first time provide for the youth of Ireland adequate educational facilities. More than that, the university will be a center of Nationalist spirit. The atmosphere will be Nationalist, every student will unconsciously absorb patriotism with learning and the university will go far to make Ireland once more a nation among nations."

I shall hardly have space to discuss the national schools, as the common schools in Ireland are called. They provide an instructive example in themselves of the evils and absurdities of the governmental system. The national school system was established in 1833, upon a basis of equity illustrated



ROYAL UNIVERSITY, NOW PART OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.



by the fact that the controlling board having charge of the education of children, of whom four-fifths were Catholics, was Protestant by five to two. The effect of this was seen in the persistent efforts to Anglicize the children. The use of the English language was enforced, although many thousands of children spoke Gaelic. This might be justified on the ground that English was more useful in everyday life; but as much could hardly be said for the use as text books of histories which extolled the conquest of the country by English sovereigns and lauded the defection of England from the Church to which Ireland clings. Americans, more jealous of their public schools than of any other institution, will need no emphasis upon a policy so violently opposed to fairness and peace.

Even the "readers" were carefully edited with a view to bend the youthful mind toward contentment under the ruthless injustices which Englishmen of a fairer generation have been glad to remove. Said one book: "On the east of Ireland is England, where the Queen lives. Many people who live in Ireland were born in England [two or three per cent., possibly], and we speak the same language and are called one nation."

The English educational censor, too, had a fatherly interest in the tender minds under his care. He condemned and suppressed a "reader" which contained Scott's verses, beginning:

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said:  
'This is my own, my native land'?"

Mild as is this appeal to patriotism, the English authorities expunged the verses on account of "their tendency to promote seditious feelings." Perhaps the national deficiency in humor has been at the bottom of England's refusal to grant Home Rule. This example would seem to indicate as much. But delicious as it is, it has not the exquisite flavor of Podsnappery to be found in the verses inserted in the "reader" in place of Sir Walter's incendiary lines. These were by one of the Episcopalian members of the board, and ended with the touching couplet:

"I thank the goodness and the grace which on my birth have smiled,  
And made me in these Christian days a happy English child."



It is not an unpleasant picture—the good Archbishop penning the lines which he conscientiously hoped would aid in bringing the unregenerate Irish children into the blessed state of being English; but imagine the confusion in the minds of the young Joyces and Considines and Dwyers who were called upon to recite them!

## XXI

### A SUMMARY

To those familiar with the long, dark record of Ireland's history the rapid changes of the last few years must be impressive. During the tour I have described through districts which bore the deepest scars of injustice and poverty I saw on every hand evidences of the economic regeneration. And while the alteration in this corner of the island is perhaps the most noticeable, it is simply one feature of the great national advance. As no other nation, in modern times, has suffered under so elaborate and crushing a system of spoliation, so no other has been the subject of such vast experiments in remedial legislation. From the savage plundering of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries grew up a government grotesque in its injustice and a land system utterly ruthless in its oppression. Under the operation of these reciprocating evils every principle of right seemed to be extinguished and every natural economic tendency perverted. The privileges of property, though founded upon robbery, wholesale confiscation and merciless penal laws, were held superior to all else, even to human life. In the matter of land—a matter of life and death to two-thirds of the population—the law of supply and demand was strangled and the law of force substituted.

This unnatural treatment inevitably bred unnatural conditions. Thus the last century saw the population fleeing from Ireland as if it were stricken with plague; untold acres of fertile land given over to grazing cattle, while the people fought off starvation upon rocky hillsides and desolate swamps; despairing revolts against the system crushed by a form of martial law, by coercion, intimidation, jury packing, eviction.

But the latter part of the last century saw also the first application of the remedy, and that remedy was as excep-

tional as the disease. A more gigantic scheme of state socialism, or paternalism, has never been attempted. The British government recognized at last that the monstrous evils of former generations could never be eradicated except by reversing the whole process of those years. It is the operation of this policy which has wrought such marvelous changes in Ireland. A brief survey will illustrate the magnitude of the problem and of what has been accomplished.

The great scheme of land purchase—the transfer of the land from the landlords to the tenants, the government advancing the money and the new owners repaying it in annual instalments, with interest—first became effective in 1881. Other acts, broadening the scope of the plan, were passed in 1885, 1888, 1896 and 1903, and there is now pending still another bill, which will extinguish the last vestige of landlordism by making the sale of their estates compulsory. Progress was very slow at first, and has never kept pace with the demands of the problem, but in all, under the various acts, nearly a quarter of a million tenants have become owners of the lands they tilled.

The exceptionally acute conditions of poverty in the west of Ireland have been treated, as set forth, by the Congested Districts Board. Empowered to purchase estates, enlarge and rearrange holdings, migrate tenants from congested to more open areas, encourage agriculture, industries and fishing and assist landholders to improve their farms and better their conditions of living, the board has worked a transformation over a large district. It has expended nearly \$17,000,000 in the eighteen years of its existence, and the result is seen in colonies of comfortable, prosperous farms where formerly there was the most dire and helpless poverty.

A special work of the government has been the restoration of evicted tenants. Thousands of these families sacrificed themselves for principle in the land wars, particularly in the bitter struggle of 1879-80. Then they were rebels, and suffered all the rigors of the war which they invited by their resistance. But the time came when it was recognized that they were "wounded soldiers" and that they have peculiar claims upon the government which inherited the

system of injustice. These evicted tenants are being restored to the lands which were torn from them by force, or to lands of equivalent value. Houses are erected for them, the farms are stocked, and after years of suffering they once more are on the road to self-supporting independence.

Paternalism of a still more radical character is being applied in the case of the agricultural laborers of the country. Their condition was naturally worse than that of the tenants. Depending upon their unskilled labor and the product of the tiny patches of land surrounding their homes, they occupied wretched hovels, not only in discomfort, but in constant peril from disease. Several acts for the benefit of these laborers have been passed, under which county authorities are able to borrow government funds for the erection of decent, sanitary dwellings, which rent for the trifling sum of a shilling a week. Nearly 50,000 of these neat cottages have been erected and as many of the wretched huts swept away. Similar work has been undertaken for the poor dwellers in the towns, where tenement life has been upon the lowest possible scale. Here, also, the local authorities are empowered to borrow funds and erect sanitary houses, which are rented at a very low rate to the artisans.

And in the swinging back of the pendulum from the evils of unchecked landlord rule a point has been reached in regard to town tenants which will startle even Americans. An act which became effective on January 1, 1907, applying to "houses, shops and other buildings in urban districts, towns or villages, and occupied either for residential or business purposes, or partially for residential and partly for business purposes," provides as follows:

"Subject to the provisions of this act, a tenant of a holding to which this act applies may, on quitting his holding, claim, in the prescribed manner, compensation, to be paid by the landlord, in respect of all improvements on his holding made by him or his predecessors in title which at the date of such claim add to the letting value of the holding, and are suitable to the character of the holding, and have not diminished the letting value of any other property of the same landlord.

"Where the landlord, without good and sufficient cause, terminates or refuses to grant a renewal of the tenancy, or it is proved that an increase of the rent is demanded from the tenant as the result of improvements which have been effected at the cost of such tenant, and for which he has not, either directly or indirectly,

received an equivalent from the landlord, and such demand results in the tenant quitting his holding, the tenant shall, in addition to the compensation (if any) to which he may be entitled in respect of improvements, and notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary, be entitled to compensation for the loss of good-will and the expense which, by reason of his quitting the holding, he sustains or incurs."

This is certainly drastic, but it should be remembered that the conditions in Irish towns are quite unlike the conditions in American towns. In Ireland the town tenant, like the agricultural tenant, has been quite at the mercy of the landlord, because the landlord usually owns every foot of land in the town. He never sells land; he rents it. Hence the tenant has not been able to look elsewhere for land in case of disagreement with the landlord or an excessive demand in rent. He has had to meet the demand or leave the town. This act simply protects the town tenant against capricious eviction. If the landlord wants to get rid of him he must pay him not only for the improvements he has made on the property, but for the good-will of his business.

That land purchase and the other great reforms have brought a steadily increasing measure of prosperity to Ireland there is abundant evidence, none of it more impressive than the records of the people's savings. Here are the figures for the savings banks conducted by the post office and by private enterprise for the years 1881, 1896 and 1907:

	1881.	1896.	1907.
Number of accounts.....	150,097	350,887	550,223
Total deposits.....	\$19,010,505	\$41,674,965	\$65,445,790

Education in Ireland, which suffered grievously through prejudice and neglect, is at last receiving a respectable measure of attention. The government now makes an annual appropriation of \$200,000 for improving the school houses and \$570,000 for increases in teachers' salaries. But the most notable advance has been the establishment, on August 1, 1908, of the National University of Ireland.

Assuredly, Ireland is on the up grade. The wrongs of centuries are being righted, the curse of landlordism is being lifted, economic independence is replacing the system of serfdom, a national university is established. What more, then, does Ireland want?

A trifling thing—self-government.

## THE DEMAND FOR HOME RULE

### XXII

#### \*THE CONQUESTS OF IRELAND

In a public address on July 4, 1909, before a crowd in Arklow, County Wicklow, which cheered American independence as heartily as it cheered Ireland's demands, John E. Redmond made this statement:

"The present budget is unjust to Ireland. With the exception of that of last year, every budget since the Union has been unjust to Ireland. And I tell you that that will continue, no matter what party is in power, until we get Home Rule. The only way to stop the robbery of Ireland by English budgets is to make the Irish Nationalists a united force to obtain self-government for our country."

Here are other recent utterances by the same man:

"The demand for national self-government is founded by us, first of all, upon right, and we declare that no ameliorative reforms, no number of land acts or laborers' acts or education acts, no redress of financial grievances, no material improvement or industrial development can ever satisfy Ireland until Irish laws are made and administered upon Irish soil by Irishmen.

\*Most of these chapters on Home Rule were written in Dublin in July and August, 1909.

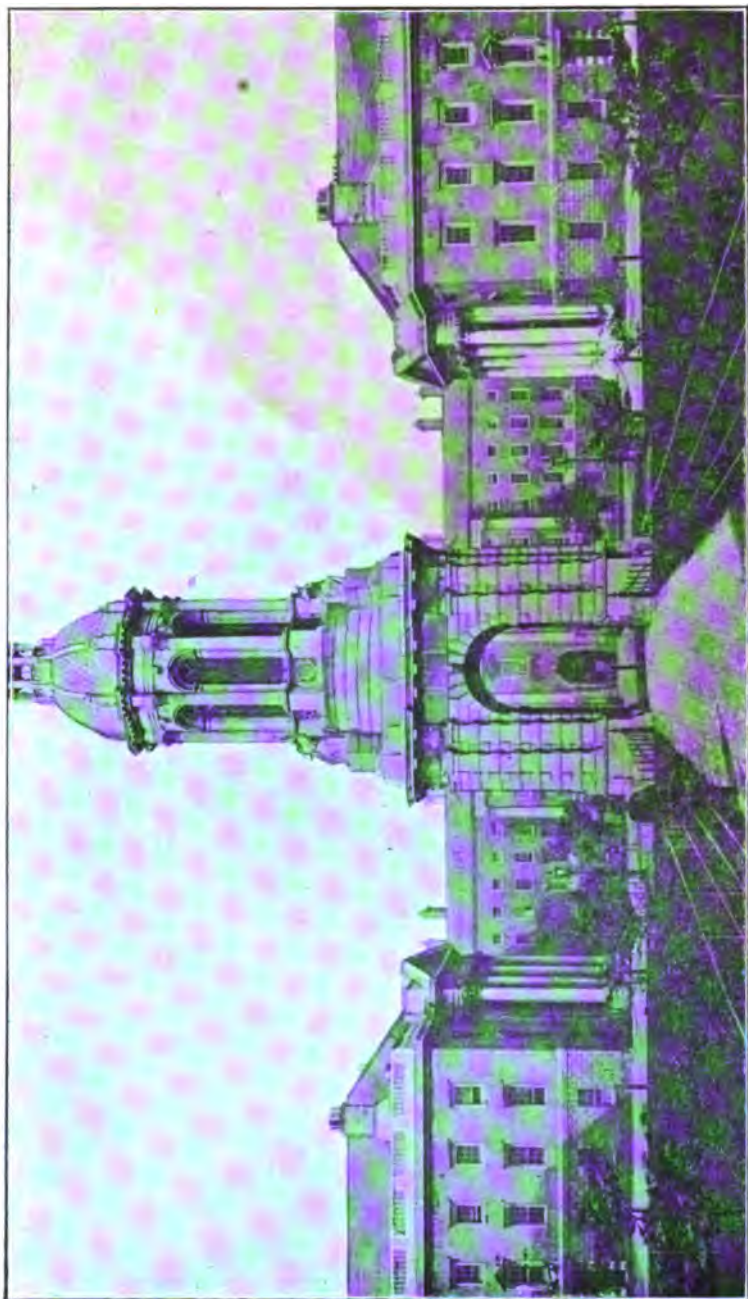
"You have heard how much has been done, especially in the last twenty-five years, to mitigate the sufferings of Ireland on the question of the land and the laborers and education. But the doctrine that we hold is that none of these things, no amelioration of our condition by palliatives, can settle the Irish question or can turn this into a prosperous and contented nation. We say that can be done only by Home Rule.

"I have, as have my parliamentary colleagues, the utmost sympathy with every effort at industrial revival; but I say here, without the slightest hesitation, I believe that until you have first freedom in the land you will never be a prosperous country. I say that the one remedy is Home Rule."

These are fairly strong words. But they accurately represent the views of the great mass of the people of this country. Mr. Redmond is chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party and recognized leader of the Irish race throughout the world. In this he speaks for the nation, or for a very large majority of it.

"What does Ireland want now?" asked Pitt, wearily, a century ago, and "What does Ireland want now?" many Englishmen echo to-day. Indeed, I have heard the same flippancy from Americans. At the bottom of it, of course, is ignorance. Few Englishmen understand, or have any desire to understand, the Irish question in its complex phases; and too many Americans, through intellectual indolence, have accepted the view industriously propagated by Toryism, that the Irish demands are totally unreasonable and the race incapacitated for the affairs of government.

I purpose to examine, from the viewpoint of an American who has taken the trouble to study the problem historically and by actual observation, what these demands are and what measure of justice there is behind them. The term Home Rule, of course, carries its own definition. Ireland demands that her laws, now made and administered by a people foreign in blood, in religion and in sympathy, shall be made and administered by Irishmen. She demands self-government, instead of government by an alien class; a government which shall be created by the votes of the Irish



A COURTYARD IN TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.





people and shall be responsive and responsible to them—in other words, a free Irish Parliament and an Irish executive responsible to the elected body. There is, in truth, a section which goes far beyond this, which demands complete separation from Great Britain and the erection of an independent nation. But this policy, however inspiring it may be to men whose very souls have been embittered by brooding upon past wrongs, does not come within the scope of practical politics at this time. Whatever the future may hold, it is fairly obvious that Home Rule, as it is usually defined, is the vital and living ambition of the people.

Are all the great reforms, then, which have been discussed in previous chapters to be dismissed as useless? Hardly that, yet they alone can never satisfy the Irish people, can never establish peace and prosperity on a sound and permanent basis. The inmates of an almshouse are free from care; all economic problems have been solved for them; yet they often are so ungrateful as to yearn for something else—independence. The metaphor is extremely faulty, yet it has a hazy sort of application to the Irish demand for Home Rule. The impossible system of land tenure, with all its attendant evils, is being wiped out; the people are being made owners of their lands—paying full price for them; control of local affairs has been put into their hands; an earnest and successful effort is being made to lift the more helpless victims of poverty; equality has been granted in facilities for higher education. And still there remains the great unsatisfied demand for self-government. Still Ireland remains sullen, resenting and resisting the system which affronts the national spirit, and which it declares is cumbersome, costly and wholly inefficient.

These charges will be taken up in detail. The government of Ireland will be examined from the viewpoints of utility, expediency and political justice, and the national demand explained more fully. Meanwhile, it may be remarked that no one can understand the Irish question without some knowledge of the history of the country. The evils of misgovernment and of land oppression that are visible to-day are not of recent growth; they have their roots in centuries long past. The half-starved peasant in

Connemara is the descendant of the victims of Tudor aggression; the grotesque extravagance and futility of Dublin Castle were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Before attempting to deal, therefore, with the present system of government in Ireland we shall take a rapid survey of the country's history. Assuredly this is necessary for American understanding of the problems, for even in matters historical the English and Irish viewpoints are hopelessly at variance. To most Englishmen—though to less now than at any other period—the story of Ireland is the story of a backward, "impossible" people, who for centuries have retarded their growth and the spread of civilization by resisting the blessings of English rule. Few of them nowadays will go so far as to defend the atrocities of the "conquests," plantations and confiscations, but at heart they do believe that most of the woes of the country are due to inherent defects in the Irish character, especially that defect which prevents recognition of English institutions as the best for all races under the sun.

The evils of the past, they say, have been atoned for; justice is being done; why rake up wrongs of history that should be forgotten? Why persist in dwelling upon the past? Irish history is not taught to English children, and only in recent years has its teaching to Irish children been permitted. To Irishmen, on the contrary, the history of their country is a constant inspiration. The land is sown with ruins, every one of which is the center of heroic legend or story. The record is inspiring because it is filled with the names of brave men and the tales of brave deeds—because, in fact, the very suppression of Irish nationality and Irish progress has left the people little else to venerate. In the face of England's stolid assumption of superiority, it is comforting for them to recall that while England was still in the mists of paganism Ireland was bright with a rude sort of culture and a Christian civilization, and that until brute force and persecution had done their work Ireland was the custodian of knowledge and the teacher of Europe. The history of these early days, much of which is legendary, may be treated very briefly. Geographically isolated, Ireland escaped Roman invasion and bears no

marks of Roman institutions. Her development was independent, from within. During the first centuries of the Christian era, students declare, there existed in the land a civilization of an advanced type, considering the time. Tribal organizations ruled society, each having an elected chieftain. The tribes were united in groups, or clans, and these were grouped again into the five kingdoms of Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connaught and Meath, all owning a sentimental allegiance to the King of all Ireland, whose seat was at the famed hill of Tara and whose sovereignty eventually settled in the powerful family of the O'Neills. The art and the system of laws of this period show a high state of development, but it is the literature which still remains the wonder and admiration of scholars. Of the manuscripts that have survived, L. Paul-Dubois, a French authority, says:

"They comprise prose and verse, stories and poems, history and fiction. In them are found mingled primitive rudeness and exquisite delicacy, an orient<sup>al</sup> imaginativeness and a strong common sense. Exhibiting, as they do, a combination of freshness of feeling, delicacy of sentiment and at the same time perfect naturalness, these remains have proved a literary inspiration to the greatest modern poets, to Tennyson and Swinburne, for instance, in our own time. It was from Ireland that Europe received her first love song. It was the Irish who invented rhyme, in all its varied forms, single or double, final, initial or medial, including the most elaborate assonances and alliterations. And it is remarkable that we never find in the bardic literature that exuberance of diction and exaggeration of form that often grates upon us in the later epics. They show, on the contrary, as we are told by Dr. Sigerson, 'classic reserve in thought, form and expression.' It is no exaggeration to say, with this learned Irishman, that the literary scepter once wielded by Rome fell in later times to Celtic Ireland."

But more important than the glory of ancient Irish literature was the fading of paganism before the light of Christianity. This transformation was brought about in the fifth century, chiefly through the ministrations of St. Patrick, "the Apostle of Ireland," and the religion took such a

hold upon the minds and hearts of the people that Ireland became the center from which Christianity radiated throughout Europe. Not only did Irish missionaries travel far and wide throughout the continent, spreading the doctrines of the Church, but the island became a Mecca for the students of many nations. Latin and Greek, science and theology, philosophy and literature were taught at scores of schools. To the institutions at Clonfert, Armagh, Lismore and elsewhere came thousands of young men from Gaul, from Italy and from the northern countries. Of the famed University of Clonmacnoise the ruins still stand.

"From the fifth to the eighth century," says L. Paul-Dubois, "Ireland was the refuge and the home of modern culture, and may truly be said to have saved European civilization in the days of the barbarian incursions."

Such was the glory of ancient Ireland, to be extinguished by successive waves of plundering invasion. Those who are inclined to wonder at the desperate situation of Ireland before the late nineteenth century era of reform should remember that that condition was the result of seven hundred years of spoliation. Much in the way of destruction can be accomplished in seven centuries, and the marvel is that the race survived at all.

The "Golden Age," as it has been called, when Ireland was the guardian of western learning and the Christian religion, lasted from the fifth to early in the ninth century. Then the first blow fell. By rapid and ruthless invasions the Northmen overran the island, founding towns on the seaboard, from which they penetrated to the interior. They destroyed every institution of learning they found. Schools and libraries, with their priceless manuscripts, were burned and Irish civilization all but extinguished. After less than two hundred years, however, the resilience of the race asserted itself. The Danes, defeated more than once, were decisively routed in 1014 by Brian Boru, and the restoration of Irish power was marked by a remarkable renaissance of Irish literature and art and religion. Manuscripts multiplied, schools and churches were rebuilt and Irish missionaries once more penetrated barbarian Europe. Everything promised a permanent revival of civilization in the island,

and had the country been permitted to work out its own destinies a strong nation would have been established. But fate gave her no time. The English invasions began, and Ireland was doomed to seven hundred years of unrest, oppression and persecution.

The first "civilizing" expedition from across the Irish Sea was that of Richard, Earl of Pembroke, better known as "Strongbow," who was invited over in 1169 by Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, as an ally against Roderrick O'Connor, "High King" of Ireland. It is said that the invasion was sanctioned by Adrian IV, Nicholas Breakspeare, the only Englishman who ever became Pope. At any rate, Henry II soon followed Strongbow, established himself for a short time in Dublin and had himself recognized as Overlord of Ireland, asserting his claim under the papal bull.

This was the entering wedge, to be driven home by three hundred and fifty years of invasion. Almost without interruption, during this long period, a stream of English colonists and adventurers poured into the country. Gradually they established a rude authority over a strip of land on the east coast called the "English pale," which extended, at its greatest development, to not more than one-third of the area of the island. Outside of that territory the English could do no more than foster dissensions among the Irish clans, and so prevent a united attack.

It should be observed that in no sense did the English conquer Ireland during these three hundred and fifty years. Indeed, the "pale" was in constant danger from Irish incursions, and outside of it English authority was unknown. Moreover, there was no permanency of settlement even within the "pale." Most of the colonists and adventurers to whom grants of Irish land had been made exploited the country as far as they were able and then returned to England, to be replaced by others. And those who remained became, in two or three generations, quite assimilated with the natives. They adopted Irish customs and Irish dress, took Irish wives and spoke the Irish language. So dangerous was this fusion of the races to English ascendancy that in 1367 a statute was issued punishing the acts specified by death or imprisonment. To widen the chasm between the

two peoples the Irish were actually outlawed; except as a special favor, they could not claim the benefits of feudalism, while they felt all of its rigors. Yet even this savage legislation did not completely check the assimilation of the races. Moreover, there grew up an intermediate people, called the "Anglo-Irish," who, the loyalists complained, were more Irish than the Irish themselves. These attached themselves to powerful Anglo-Norman families, such as the Fitzgeralds, the Butlers, the Desmonds and the Burkes (de Burgh), which, in time, usurped the power of the Crown within the "pale" and made alliances at will with the great Gaelic chieftains. Thus by the end of the fifteenth century the "pale" had shrunk to a narrow strip of country around Dublin, threatened constantly by the proud and turbulent lords of the Anglo-Irish, while all the rest of Ireland had reverted to the old Gaelic clan system. After more than three hundred years the conquest had failed.

But the next wave of invasion, to extend over a period of two hundred years, was to be more successful, as it was more ruthless, than the last. The Tudor sovereigns were merciless, but they were fairly thorough. Under Henry VII English armies penetrated even into Connaught. Henry VIII set himself resolutely to break the power of the Anglo-Irish nobles as he had broken the power of the English barons. Having accomplished this, he sought to establish peace in the distracted country by conciliating the Celtic aristocracy. He won over some of the great chieftains, gave them lands taken from the monasteries and conferred upon them English titles—Earl of Tyrone, Earl of Tyrconnel, Earl of Dunraven and so on. Thus when in 1542 he assumed the title of King of Ireland the country was relatively at peace, and remained so until his death. But this was not to last. Under Mary and Elizabeth and the Stuarts the policy of conciliation was abandoned and a policy of plunder and oppression substituted. It was decreed that by force of arms Celtic civilization should be wiped out, to be replaced by English civilization. Where Henry VIII had respected and protected native customs and laws it was ordered that English laws and English institutions should be made supreme. But the real core of

the policy was that the soil of Ireland should be confiscated and then "planted" with Englishmen.

Under Queen Mary, King's and Queen's counties were established from confiscated territory and English settlers placed on the lands. Under Elizabeth, the Desmonds were maltreated into rebellion, then their lands, comprising about the whole province of Munster, were seized and distributed among English adventurers and speculators. When the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell arose under James I a similar operation confiscated all of Ulster, and nearly 30,000 of the King's Scotch subjects were "planted" where the Irish had been. A more characteristic act of James was his abolition of the Gaelic system of land tenure and the substitution of the English system; this destroyed the efficacy of countless titles, and nearly half a million acres more were confiscated. Naturally, these vast depredations were not carried out without bloodshed. There were three great insurrections under Elizabeth alone, and each was put down with merciless severity. The policy was ingeniously devised to expedite the seizure of the coveted territories. The rebellions were deliberately provoked by treachery and oppression, then put down by wholesale massacre.

"The suppression of the native race," says Lecky, "was carried out with a ferocity which surpassed that of Alva in the Netherlands, and has seldom been exceeded in the pages of history."

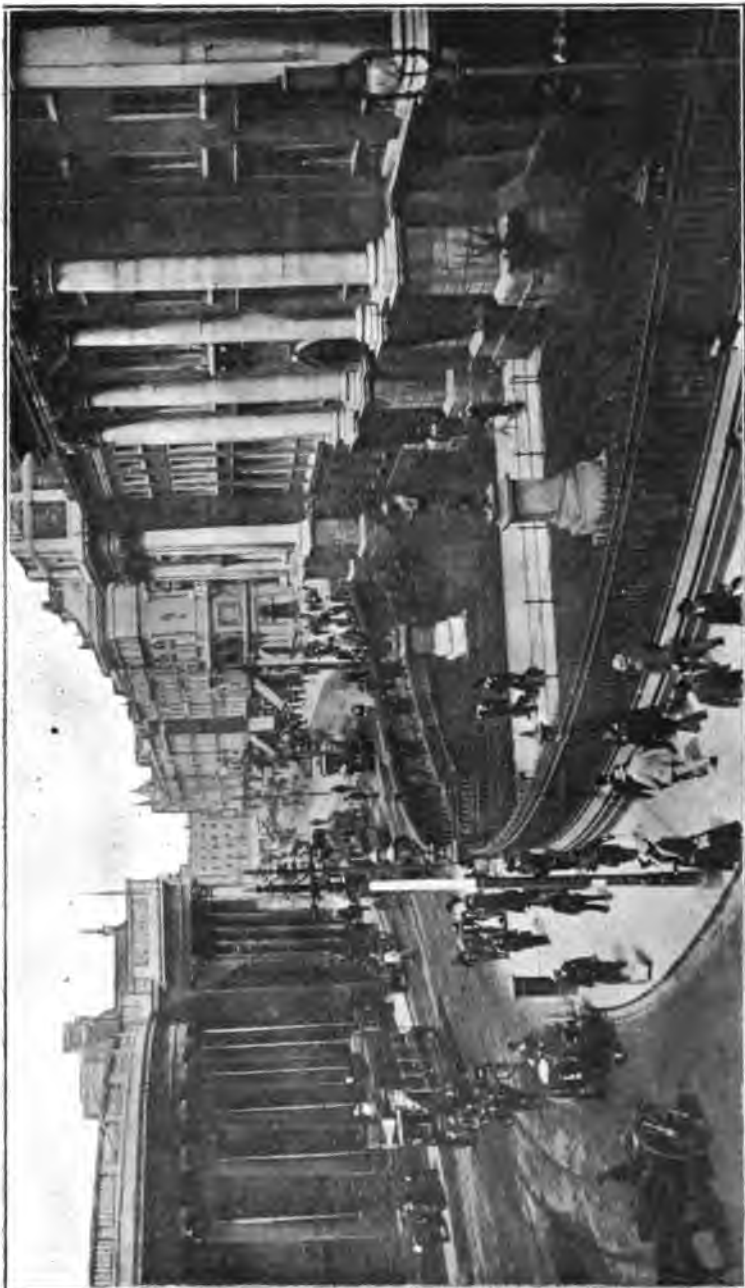
The wars were wars of extermination, not conquest. The expeditions waged campaigns of systematic butchery, sparing neither men nor women nor children, while those who survived crept forth from their hiding places to find the country devastated and to starve amid the desolation. The annals of the time—English as well as Irish—sicken the reader with their records of savagery. An English official in 1582 wrote that within six months 30,000 persons had died of starvation in Munster, besides those who had been butchered by the soldiery. Even during periods of peace the English governors sedulously continued the work of extermination by laying waste all the country they could cover. In the last years of the sixteenth century one-half the population perished. Elizabeth's rule over Ireland was



complete. But, says a historian, "she reigned over corpses and ashes."

Yet, incredible as it may seem, the ruthless work of "conquest" was revived and continued during almost the whole of the seventeenth century. New elements, however, entered into the English policy. To the lust for land were added political revenge and religious persecution. In both the Stuart revolutions—that which cost Charles I his head and that which cost James II his throne—the Irish took the losing side, and suffered the vengeance of the victorious party for their mistaken loyalty to the condemned house. Likewise, for rejecting the reformation and clinging to Roman Catholicism, the Irish called down upon themselves the rigors of persecution. Built upon the successive "plantations" and enriched with the confiscated property of monasteries, the Anglican Church conducted a campaign against the obdurate natives. To this were added the forcible settlement of Ulster with Scotchmen and the spoliation of native landholders under the cloak of legal enactments. In effect, to be Irish was to be exposed to every form of oppression. The hatred and despair engendered by these things burst at last into the Catholic rebellion of 1641.

The Protestant settlers of Ulster suffered first, some thousands of them being slain. Soon the insurgents were supreme throughout Catholic Ireland, established their own Parliament and entered into a compact with the doomed King, Charles I. This was fatal, though doubtless they would have felt the iron hand of Cromwell in any event. When he had crushed the royalists in England the Protector turned deliberately upon Ireland. There is no redder page in history than that which records this invasion of Ireland. Cromwell landed in the country in 1649 and marched upon the rebels, and at every stamp of his foot the land gushed blood. The garrison of Drogheda was massacred, 30,000 men. Wexford was taken and the defenders put to the sword. Wherever a rebel was captured he was shot or hanged. Merciless measures followed the "pacification" of the country. Shiploads of Irish, including women and children, were sent as slaves to the West Indies. Thousands of men were driven as exiles to France and Spain. Crom-



COLLEGE GREEN, DUBLIN; BANK OF IRELAND ON LEFT, TRINITY COLLEGE ON RIGHT.



well's policy of exterminating the Irish and substituting an English population was as nearly successful as such an enterprise could be. The provinces of Ulster, Munster and Leinster were confiscated and the land divided among the Roundhead soldiers and the speculators who had advanced to Parliament the funds for the "conquest." Connaught alone, as the least fertile of the provinces, was reserved for the Irish owners of the country. There they might settle, and nowhere else. Death was decreed against any Irishman found east of the Shannon river.

"The Irish shall go to hell or Connaught!" was Cromwell's phrase.

It was Cromwell, then, who made modern Ireland, with all its afflicting evils. Yet he did not quite carry out his pitiless program. The Irish continued to exist in Connaught, and also in the other provinces, because the English colonists wanted to use them as laborers. The "extermination" was so incomplete, to use a contradictory phrase, that in less than fifty years the Irish were able to rebel again. Lured by the promises of the hunted James II that the rights of Catholics would be restored by him, they rose against the English. They assembled their own Parliament, and, remembering past wrongs, sought revenge by dealing to Protestants discriminatory laws such as they themselves had suffered under. The Battle of the Boyne ended their hopes, and a million acres more were confiscated by William III and "planted" with men of the dominant minority. This was the last of the great "plantations," one reason being that the work was virtually completed, and the Irish landowner was eradicated in favor of the English adventurer and speculator. The reader will begin to understand now the origin of that interminable "land problem" which the laborious legislation of the last forty years has attempted to solve.

But what was the final situation left by these centuries of attempted conquest, during which wars, "plantations," rebellions and massacres followed one another in ghastly monotony? What was the result of the successive "conquests" by Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, Roundhead and Orange invasion?

It is true that the Irish people were crushed into submission, but the "conquest," instead of welding a strong, united nation, simply intensified the division between the races and piled up the gigantic debt which the British Empire is now paying. The cleavage between the two peoples, which had been merely racial, was widened by social, religious and political prejudices. On the one side were the English and Scotch Protestants, directly or by inheritance the beneficiaries of the invasions and "plantations." These held the land, the wealth and the political power of the country. The government was theirs, the laws were theirs, the courts were theirs, all offices and preferment were theirs. Even the church of the majority of them (the Anglican) was a state church, endowed with confiscated Irish lands and supported by public taxes.

On the other side were all the rest of the people, a vast majority, professing the condemned Catholic faith. Irish, Anglo-Irish and English, they had neither land, nor wealth, nor political power, nor fair standing before the law; they were united by a common misery and a common hatred of England. In studying the present Home Rule demand, then, we turn from 1909, back to 1689. The two succeeding centuries must also be examined.

## XXIII

### PENAL LAWS

The invasions, "plantations" and massacres of the preceding three hundred years had been so effective that the beginning of the eighteenth century found Ireland quite crushed. The land, wealth and political power of the country were in the hands of the English and Protestant minority; the Irish majority were sullen, but helpless and hopeless, submissive to the government inflicted upon them because resistance meant more massacres and wider starvation. But while the "conquest" was in this sense complete, the English "garrison" was not satisfied. It deemed it necessary to protect the future, to make impossible the restoration of the stolen land and stolen rights to the Irish. Though landless and powerless, they were still a menace by their very numbers and by the spirit of unity resulting from their common misery and religion. They must be outlawed for all time. Having been robbed by every kind of violence, it remained only to give the robbery a form of legal sanction.

The obvious resort was religious persecution, not by the coarse methods of the rack and the stake, for these had simply stimulated faith, whether used against Catholics or Protestants, but by the more deadly methods of legislation. To the era of land confiscation, then, succeeded the era of penal laws. This form of oppression is the distinguishing infamy of the misgovernment of Ireland during the eighteenth century. Some historians believe that it would have been possible to weld the two peoples at the beginning of that century into a strong, united nation. As we have seen, they were widely apart in social, political and religious sympathies, but under a decent and equitable system of government the Irish would gradually have assimilated the minority, as they had assimilated many of the early "planters" and many of the invading soldiery. England and the "gar-

rison," however, set themselves deliberately to widen the breach instead of closing it, and thus perpetuated the enmities and the wrongs which have existed to this day. The Irish suffered also from the inherent weakness of the system above them. They were ruled by the English "garrison," but the "garrison" was in turn subject to the schemes and whims of the government in London. Thus all sense of responsibility was submerged in selfish interests. England worked to wring all she could from both the peoples in Ireland, indifferent to the rights of either, while the "garrison" exploited to the utmost the helpless majority. The Irish had to bear the double burden.

As to the penal laws, the chosen weapons of spoliation during the eighteenth century, it is hard for Americans to realize that only two hundred years ago such monstrous perversions were cloaked with the dignity and force of legal enactment. They were deliberately designed to exclude the majority of the Irish people not only from political power, but from free ownership of property, from the benefits of education and the consolations of their religion.

"It would not be difficult," writes Goldwin Smith, the venerable Canadian philosopher and historian, "to point to persecuting laws more sanguinary than these. But it would be difficult to point to any more insulting to the best feelings of man or more degrading to religion."

A brief but effective summary of the penal laws is given by L. Paul-Dubois.

"Violence," he says, "was united to hypocrisy, perfidy to corruption, and the highest honors and rewards were reserved for the apostate and informer." The scope of the statutes—which were passed between 1695 and 1709—he defines thus:

\* "Catholic worship was tolerated, but only on sufferance. All public ceremonies and all pilgrimages were prohibited; even bells and crosses were interdicted. The ordination of any new clergymen was forbidden by law; decree of banishment was passed against all bishops and members of religious orders, and death was to be their punishment in case they returned to Ireland. Secular priests could not exercise their office, under pain of deportation, until they had registered themselves and taken not merely an oath of allegiance, but an oath of abjuration, which their Church forbade them to take. Every Papist was ordered, under pain of fine, to inform

against his clergyman. On the other hand, a public pension was assigned by the state to every priest who should turn Protestant. As for the Catholic laity, they were deprived of all political rights whatever. They were forbidden to act as teachers, under pain of banishment. They were forbidden to have their children educated, except by Protestants, or to have them educated abroad. They were debarred from obtaining any public employment or practicing any liberal profession except that of medicine.

"They could not hold property in land or take land on lease for a longer term than thirty years, and then only on the harshest conditions. If they engaged in trade or industry, they had to pay a special tax, and could not employ more than two apprentices. They were forbidden to carry arms or to own a horse of greater value than £5. They could not act as guardians of their own children, nor marry a Protestant wife, nor inherit an estate from a Protestant relative. Moreover, the property of a Catholic was equally divided among his children on his death, the law of primogeniture being confined to Protestants. The object of this last provision was, of course, to secure that if a Catholic chanced to make a fortune it should soon be dissipated. While Catholics were forbidden to engage in educational pursuits, the country was studded over with Protestant schools, where the children of Papists could receive free tuition. It was not merely the persecution of a religion, it was an attempt to degrade and demoralize a whole nation. It was sought at any cost to keep Papists in misery, ignorance and slavery, and this with no other purpose save to assure the Protestant ascendancy. The 'planters' who had come to Ireland in the time of Cromwell or William III knew how precarious was their title to the land, and they thus sought to adopt means that could not fail to assure their position."

If these persecutions, which even Englishmen must abhor, had been due to an outburst of religious fanaticism merely, they would have no extended place in these letters, which aim to treat only of the economic and political status of Ireland. But it is quite clear that the infamous penal laws were inspired not by zealotry, but by greed.

"Pure religious fanaticism," wrote Lecky, "does not indeed appear ever to have played a dominant part in this legislation. The object of the penal laws, even in the worst period, was much less to produce a change of religion than to secure property and power by reducing to complete impotence those who had formerly possessed them."

Thus we find that the penal laws had a deadly effect in stripping the Irish people of their political rights and their land, and the results are manifest to-day in the evils of misgovernment and of the land system which is now disappearing. After fifty years of enforcement the severity of the



statutes was allowed to relax, as they had accomplished the designed purpose. Very few of the Irish had been driven or tempted to profess religious "conversion," and their children continued to be educated in "hedge schools," the maintenance of which Lecky regards as "one of the most honorable features in their history." But the persecution started a stream of emigration of the best elements among the people, a drain which was never to cease, and, on the other hand, it transformed those who remained into a race of slaves. Those who fled to the Continent filled the pages of war history with the records of Irish valor, and took revenge upon England at Fontenoy and Dettingen; those left behind, robbed of every right of freemen and worn out from massacre and oppression, sank into sullen serfdom. Nationality was extinguished. The people were inert, hopeless, exhausted. Poverty spread among them like a plague, and there was no strength to resist it. At intervals of a few years came famines, that of 1741 being so desperate that one-third of the poor of Munster died of hunger and fever. As the black years rolled on the very despair of the people bred lawlessness and violence; there were bloody risings against the extortion of the landlords and the extortion of the state church in the form of tithes. Of course, these agrarian rebellions met punishment swift and terrible—imprisonment, hanging and transportation by wholesale. So the weary tale went on.

It could not last. The very barbarity of the system reacted upon those who inflicted it. The minority which held the power became infected with the weaknesses of despotism. Luxury bred extravagance and extravagance bred corruption. Moreover, the tyranny which this class practiced against the Irish majority invited tyranny upon itself. England treated the ruling minority in Ireland with the harshness and contempt it had earned, though she did so for selfish reasons and with no thought of revenging the victims of the system. The Irish Parliament—a wholly Protestant body, Catholics being ineligible for membership, and even to vote at the elections—was stripped of all real authority, all its acts being subject to approval in London. Furthermore, England deliberately strangled Irish industry

and trade, those who suffered directly being chiefly Protestants, since the penal laws had made it virtually impossible for Catholics to engage profitably in commerce. The effect was felt most severely in Ulster, whence 200,000 Presbyterians emigrated in fifty years, most of them settling in America, where they added vigor to the revolutionary spirit that freed the colonies.

England had gone too far. She was destined to see Protestants and Catholics united against her, and Irish independence proclaimed throughout the land, and this before the end of the century in which the most sweeping persecution had all but stamped out Irish nationality. Not all of the Protestant minority accepted tamely the oppression from London. In the course of years there arose in the colony a third party, whose main principle was that the welfare of Ireland as a whole should be held superior to any other consideration, especially to the interests of England. The greatest of these "Irish Whigs" were Edmund Burke and Henry Grattan, and one saying of the latter, a Protestant, illustrates an important phase of the new party's policy.

"The Irish Protestant never can be free," said this Protestant leader, "while the Irish Catholic is a slave."

Deep-rooted as was the minority's hatred and fear of the majority, these men and their followers were big enough to despise and oppose it. For the theory that the great mass of the citizens must be ground down and oppressed for the benefit of the few, they substituted the idea of Irish nationality. It took root and grew, and religious differences no longer operated to prevent Ireland's presenting a united front to England. There were heard demands for justice, for liberation from the intolerable burden of misrule by a selfish minority in Ireland and an indifferent government in England. Perhaps the movement would have succeeded in any event, but that which turned the scale was the American Revolution. The militia of 40,000 raised by Ireland for defense in 1776 gave a hint of the country's power. Its demands became more imperative, and England, sobered by the loss of her greatest colony, was forced to yield. With great strides Ireland advanced toward the goal of a national existence.

In 1778 Catholics regained some of their lost rights. They could once more own land and inherit under the common law. Within a year the shackles which England had fastened upon Irish industry and commerce were struck off. In 1782, under the leadership of Grattan, the Irish Parliament asserted and compelled recognition of its independence. Ireland was now an independent nation, bound to England only by the tie of the Crown. In 1782, also, the religion and education of Catholics were freed from some of the burdens of the penal laws. Ten years later Catholics were made eligible for admission to the bar and for jury service, and in 1793 they won the right to vote at parliamentary elections.

The pioneers in the fight for Irish rights were justified in their declaration that self-government would bring prosperity. The country fairly glowed with new life. Agriculture revived, industries were established, the stagnant channels of trade and commerce became once more animated. Religious and political animosities began to fade before the growing light of economic prosperity. It seemed as if the tale of Ireland's misery had ended. But it was simply the closing of a chapter.



ONE OF THE NEW HOUSES.



IMPROVEMENTS BY TENANT PURCHASER.



## XXIV

### SOLD OUT

With a Parliament of her own, a lifting of the cloud of religious persecution and a revival of industry, Ireland faced toward the end of the eighteenth century an era of peace and prosperity. But a fatal weakness remained in the system. It was destined to undermine the whole structure and bring with the close of the century such a reverse to Irish progress as would darken the succeeding hundred years with records of injustice and suffering. While the Parliament in Dublin was freed from English dictation, it was not a truly Irish Parliament. Its independence was won by Grattan in 1782, but it was not until 1793 that Catholics gained the right to vote. Meanwhile the Parliament remained wholly Protestant—Presbyterians as well as Catholics were excluded—and almost wholly devoted to the interests of the landlords and their oligarchy.

The Opposition, led by Grattan, fought gallantly, but could not overcome the arbitrary power of the government forces, founded upon representation from "rotten boroughs" and the most flagrant corruption. Electoral reform became a burning issue, supported strongly by the Volunteers, Protestants for the most part, but the demand was treated with contempt. Gradually the tyranny and venality of the parliamentary majority drew patriots of both races together in a campaign to break the vicious system.

Out of the turmoil arose the inevitable leader, Theobald Wolfe Tone. He was a Protestant, but a man of just and liberal ideas, which under the inspiration of the French revolution became radical. Under him the Volunteers became the United Irishmen; Presbyterians, Catholics and all men of liberal ideas joining with them. The jobbery and corruption of the government were hotly denounced;

Belfast, the center of militant Protestantism, began a movement to found an Irish republic. But as the maddened people of France plunged into excesses, and the Irish radicals applauded them, there was a reaction among the middle-class Protestant Liberals and some of the Catholic clergy, and as a result the movement shrank until it included only advanced revolutionaries. The government in 1793 was able to disband the Volunteers. Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald went to France and raised an expedition under Hoche, who failed in an attempt to land in Bantry Bay. Under a policy of conciliation the unrest subsided further, and in 1796 the government felt strong enough to assume the offensive. Once more the disreputable weapons of religious persecution were seized upon. The government deliberately fomented a religious war, and the new-born spirit of nationality expired amid the rancorous strife of sectarianism. Irishmen forgot that they were Irishmen, and remembered only that they were divided in religion. Having relighted the torch of intolerance, it was not difficult for the government to start a conflagration. By a policy of provocation it stung the protesting peasantry into open revolt. This is not a charge of partisanship, but the established conviction of unbiased historians. Of the famous rising in 1798 Goldwin Smith says:

"Upon the homes of the peasantry were let loose the license and barbarity of an irregular soldiery more cruel than a regular invader. Flogging, half-hanging, pitch-capping, picketing went on over a large district, and the most barbarous scourgings without trial were inflicted in Dublin, in the very seat of government and justice. It appears not unlikely that the peasantry might have been kept quiet by measures of lenity and firmness and that they were gratuitously scourged and tortured into open rebellion."

The putting down of the insurrection was little more than a matter of slaughter, though the rebels fought with desperation and won some victories. Wolfe Tone and Lord Fitzgerald died in prison. Then followed a literal "reign of terror," when the hapless insurrectionists were subjected to the most merciless punishment. Lord Cornwallis, appointed viceroy against his will, was the most loyal of Englishmen,

but his heart revolted against the systematic barbarity which was everywhere inflicted upon the Irish people. He wrote:

"The principal persons of this country and the members of both houses of Parliament are averse to all acts of clemency, and would pursue measures that could only terminate in the extermination of the greater number of the inhabitants and in the utter destruction of the country. \* \* \* Our war is reduced to a predatory system in the mountains of Wicklow and the bogs of Kildare. \* \* \* I am very much afraid that any man with a brown coat who is found within several miles of a field of action is butchered without discrimination. \* \* \* There is no law, either in town or country, but martial law. \* \* \* Numberless murders are hourly committed by our people without any process of examination whatever."

Thus the despairing revolt of '98 was crushed. Brute force had once more put down the effort of the people to win justice from the government. But this was not all. England had still to revenge herself for the humiliation of granting legislative independence in 1782. The manufactured rebellion and the excesses which followed furnished the excuse, and it was decreed that the Irish Parliament should be wiped out, merged with the Parliament at Westminster. True, the Irish Parliament was virtually the property of the landlord minority; with some honorable exceptions, the members were leaders or beneficiaries of the intolerable system of minority rule, yet at least it had the form of an honestly representative legislature, and in time might have been regenerated by public opinion. But it was doomed to extinction.

This chapter in the history of English rule in Ireland lacks the bloody stains of those which preceded it, but, if it is possible, is more disgraceful. Pitt might have accomplished the Union by force, but he chose instead to encompass it by corruption, and make Ireland pay the cost of her own betrayal. In its first attempt, in the session of January, 1799, the government met defeat, the opposition being made up of patriots and of the selfish owners of "rotten boroughs," who, under the plan of the Union, would lose many of the parliamentary seats which they "owned." This gave the government an opportunity to split the opponents of the measure. It set out



deliberately to buy the "owners" of the eighty-five boroughs which the change would extinguish. All through the year 1799 emissaries of the government were busy upon their unholy mission. No less than \$6,300,000 was expended in buying the borough seats. Nor was this all; patents of nobility (!) were scattered lavishly as bribes. Among the betrayers of Ireland the government distributed twenty-two Irish peerages, six English peerages and twenty-two promotions in the Irish peerage, as rewards for the sale of Ireland's rights.

The Irish Parliament met for the last time on January 15, 1800. The opponents of the Union—Protestants and Catholics—presented petitions against the plan from twenty-six of the thirty-two counties. A fiery debate began. In the midst of it came a dramatic interruption. Grattan, weak and ill, walked slowly into the House, supported by two friends. Retiring, sick at heart, from the useless struggle against corruption in 1797, the leader had come back at the call of his country. His presence and his eloquence inspired the Opposition, but nothing could overcome the effect of the debauchery of the members. On an amendment to the address, indorsing the independence settled in 1782, the vote was 96 to 138, a government majority of 42. A month later, Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved the resolutions adopted in the British Parliament, embodying the articles of Union. He took occasion to make a base attack on Grattan. Ill as he was, the leader retorted in a fiery speech, branding Corry as a coward and villain. They met at dawn in the Phoenix Park, and Grattan had the satisfaction of putting a bullet in the slanderer's arm. But the beginning of the end had come. The various resolutions leading to the Union were jammed through, and the final bill was passed on May 26, by a vote of 153 to 88. This is the comment of Charles George Walpole, historian:

"Thus ended the Parliament of the English colony in Ireland. It was never in any sense representative of the nation. It was the corrupt embodiment of a dominant race. It sold the birthright of the nation for its own selfish ends. There had not even been a dissolution to test the opinion of the constituencies, the proposal to consult the people upon a question so vital to their interests having been sternly condemned by

Pitt. The most remarkable and creditable thing about the whole transaction was that so many members of the lower house were found whose integrity the government was unable to corrupt and whose honor it was powerless to purchase."

By a supreme stroke of irony, the cost of the country's betrayal, more than \$7,500,000, was charged to the national debt of Ireland, and made a permanent burden upon the Irish people. The record of infamy was complete. The world has accepted the deliberate judgment of Gladstone.

"There is no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man," he declared, "than the making of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland."

Thus, after seven hundred years of spoliation by violence and penal enactments, England had completed the subjection of Ireland by robbing her of her shadow of a Parliament under a cloak of "constitutional" methods. For better or worse, the kingdoms were united. It was to be no longer possible to blame Irish wrongs upon the "garrison." England assumed the responsibility herself. During the nineteenth century she was to open a new account with Ireland. The world, better informed and more watchful than in those other days, has been able to examine the account. It is, truly, a record far more honorable than that of the preceding centuries. Many evils have been swept away, many wrongs righted. But the fact remains that England is still vastly in Ireland's debt.

## XXV

### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

In this rapid review of the history of Ireland, with its bearing upon the present-day demand for Home Rule, we come now to a survey of the nineteenth century. The record is totally different from that of the preceding centuries. The old order changes, and changes, in a great degree, for the better. Hoary abuses are done away with, mighty reforms are inaugurated; the new system of government, under the Act of Union, has a trial of 100 years, and in the closing of the century an economic regeneration of the country is under way. Yet, if confiscation, massacre and persecution have been abandoned, condemned by the spirit of the age; if intolerance has disappeared before the spread of enlightenment, and if "a government of landlordism, tempered by assassination," has been swept away, there still remain intolerable evils, and the people of Ireland still persist in demanding a revolution in their public affairs.

The making of the Union in 1800, which Gladstone termed the blackest and foulest transaction in the history of man, simply perpetuated the systematic misrule under which Ireland had labored. The Irish Parliament of 1782-1800 was, in truth, not a representative body, but it might have been the basis of a really free legislature. With the Union, control of Irish affairs was transferred to Westminster, Ireland to have one hundred members of the House of Commons and about thirty members of the House of Lords, elected by the Irish peers. The worst feature was that Ireland was to be ruled henceforth by Englishmen, who had no knowledge of the country's needs and no sympathy with the people or their institutions.

Throughout the century, moreover, English policy toward Ireland was marked by the most fatal vacillation. Egotism and indifference combined to reject all representa-

tions of the people and to exasperate their spirit. When concessions were made, they were made in a manner to wound rather than to heal. Events moved always in the same course. The demands were met at first by contempt and mockery; when this became unbearable the Irish retorted with outbursts of lawlessness; the government's invariable remedy was coercion, the infliction of a sort of martial law, which superseded the orderly processes of justice and placed the people at the mercy of political magistrates; then violence as invariably increased, until finally, through sheer terror of a general uprising, the government yielded and hastened to grant what had been demanded. Again and again during the nineteenth century was this discreditable procedure followed. Englishmen of brains recognized the folly of the government's course, which led it to grant concessions, not in a spirit of justice, but because of dread of revolution, thus stirring the hatred of the people and putting a premium upon disorder.

"Your oppressions," said Lord John Russell to his countrymen, "have taught the Irish to hate, your concessions to brave you. You have exhibited to them how scanty was the stream of your bounty, how full the tribute of your fear."

The Land League campaign of 1879 was a defiant revolt against law and order, yet it won a signal reform.

"A more lawless, a more violent organization has scarcely ever existed in any country," declares R. Barry O'Brien, an Irish writer. "If it had not been violent and lawless it would not have succeeded. \* \* \* In 1881 the government surrendered at discretion, and another Land Act was carried amid scenes of lawlessness, violence, anarchy, outrage, panic and alarm scarcely paralleled even in the troubled history of Ireland."

If English testimony on this point is wanted, it is at hand.

"Fixity of land tenure," said Lord Derby, "has been the direct result of two causes—Irish outrage and parliamentary obstruction. The Irish know it as well as we. Not all the influence and eloquence of Mr. Gladstone would have prevailed on the English House of Commons to do what has been done in the matter of Irish tenant right if the answer to

all objections had not been ready: 'How else are we to govern Ireland?' "

"I must make one admission," said Mr. Gladstone himself, "and that is that without the Land League the Act of 1881 would not at this moment be on the statute book."

Furthermore, the reforms granted by the British Parliament were never whole-hearted measures. As they were granted under compulsion, so they were restricted as far as the government dared. If ever a country needed drastic remedies, it was Ireland. Yet the authorities temporized, vacillated and made blundering half-concessions that never fully remedied the evils at which they were aimed.

The century opened ominously. The people watched in sullen anger the extinction of their liberties by the Act of Union. In 1803 Robert Emmet, the bravest and most picturesque of Ireland's heroes, led a despairing revolt which failed, and died on the scaffold with such supreme courage that his name has ever been dearest to his race. But the story of this rising belongs really to the eighteenth century; "it was the last flicker of the fire of 1798," says O'Brien. Let us examine briefly the condition of the country after the Union. The population was about 5,000,000; four-fifths of these were Catholics, 600,000 Episcopalians, 400,000 of other churches, chiefly Presbyterians. All of the political power was in the hands of the 600,000 Episcopalians; they gave no consideration to the Presbyterians, and Catholics, in spite of the abolition of many penal enactments against them, held no positions of trust in public affairs. Four-fifths of the people of Ireland "had no more to do with the government of the country," it has been said, "than a community of mice might have to do with a government of cats." The government's attitude upon religion was the same. The Anglican Church was established and endowed—a state church, supported by public tithes. The Presbyterian and Catholic Churches were tolerated, but were supported by the voluntary contributions of members, who had also to pay tithes to the Episcopalian Church. Education was similarly burdened with injustice, as has been related in another chapter.

In all these evils may be traced the effects of the funda-



COMING FROM MARKET.



mental weakness of the Union. It did not unite the races—it was not designed to do so—it simply united the government of Great Britain with a political party in Ireland. The minority remained in supreme control; but, having been relieved of responsibility, lost whatever sense of patriotism it might have had. Nor did the home government keep the pledges upon which it had forced the union. Complete emancipation of the Catholics was solemnly promised, but twenty-nine years elapsed before the pledge was redeemed, and then only under the pressure of a national agitation. Back of this was the great figure of Daniel O'Connell, whose name is indelibly written on the history of emancipation. In 1823 he reorganized the old Catholic Association, which had lost power because of division among its members. It spread throughout the whole country, enlisting the support of peasants, gentry and priests, and for five years maintained a ceaseless agitation for equal rights. Finally, in 1828, O'Connell had himself elected member of Parliament from Clare, although as a Catholic he was ineligible to take his seat. In the following year, finding public opinion dangerous, the government yielded, but on terms which seriously restricted the franchise, cutting the Irish electorate from 260,000 votes to 26,000.

Encouraged by this success, O'Connell began his famous agitation for the repeal of the Union. In his fight for Catholic emancipation he had had the support of Protestant Liberals, but they deserted him on the repeal issue, and henceforth Protestant Ireland was to be Unionist. For five years, from 1835 to 1840, O'Connell suspended agitation and tried to gain his end by alliance with the British ministry; failing to achieve any substantial reforms, he broke the compact and resumed the struggle for repeal. By 1843 the country was aflame upon the issue. The movement culminated in a monster meeting at the Hill of Tara, when 250,000 persons assembled. The gathering was proscribed by the authorities, and troops were hurried to the scene. It seemed as if the agitation were about to flare into rebellion. But O'Connell, ever an advocate of "constitutional methods," gave the order to disperse. From that day he lost much of his power over the people, and was openly repudiated by the followers of the



"Young Ireland" movement. He died in Genoa in 1847, under a cloud of disapprobation from radical members of his race, but secure in his fame as the "Great Liberator."

The "Young Ireland" movement was destined also to end in failure. It started well, under the leadership of such brilliant men as Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon, Charles Gavan Duffy, John Mitchel and Smith O'Brien. Some of them were Protestants, and their agitation, unlike that of O'Connell, was for Ireland as a whole, not merely for Catholic Ireland. But differences of opinion as to methods, intensified by the horrors of the famine years, led to a rupture. Davis, who was dead, and O'Brien, who was living, were for "moral force"; Mitchel—a Protestant, like Davis—and his associates were for "physical force." Mitchel's policy of violence roused the country, enlisting finally even Smith O'Brien and his friends. But the dissensions gave the government its opportunity, especially as many of the clergy strongly opposed the threatened rising. Mitchel was suddenly arrested and transported, and in a single conflict the rebellion of 1848 was crushed. The reaction from the policy of O'Connell had carried the country far, but it was impossible to transmute the aroused patriotism into successful military strategy.

Meanwhile a disaster infinitely greater smote the people—the appalling famine of 1847-1849, with its ghastly record of starvation, eviction and emigration. The comparative tranquillity of the country under the Irish Parliament and the rise in the price of farm products during the Napoleonic wars gave an impetus to Ireland which not only brought agricultural prosperity, but caused a rapid increase in the population. The population, which in 1788 was 4,040,000, had grown by 1805 to 5,395,456 and by 1821 to 6,801,827. In 1841 there were 8,175,124 inhabitants. Taking advantage of the demand for land, the landlords encouraged the subdivision of holdings, so as to increase the rents and the number of votes they could control. Then came peace and a sudden fall in the price of agricultural products, and the landlords decided that they could make more from grazing than from the rentals of tilled ground. A campaign of "clearances" began, and continued for years. Tenants were driven

from their farms and the houses leveled, Parliament industriously passing laws to make evictions easy and cheap. As there were no industries to which the people could turn, they simply had to have land; hence competition drove rents to exorbitant prices. Only by the most supreme effort could the people keep themselves from starvation. The time was coming when they could not do even that. A single bad harvest meant hunger for hundreds of thousands. Three harvests in succession failed—in 1845, 1846 and 1847. In the last two years the potato crop perished entirely. Until 1849 famine reigned throughout the land. By tens and by hundreds of thousands the people perished of hunger and fever. The roadsides were dotted with corpses. The strong fled from the country in a never-ending stream; the weak dropped in their tracks and died. The number killed by hunger was estimated at 729,033. Between 1846 and 1851 1,240,737 emigrants left the country. Between 1849 and 1852 263,000 families were evicted. There is no need to prolong the ghastly tale, which is too familiar to every person acquainted with Irish history. At fearful cost it brought home to the world a realization that a nation was perishing. The famine was unnatural, needless. It was not due to want of food, for during the years 1846 and 1847 Ireland exported far more than enough to feed her people. The trouble was that the produce of the land was used up in paying rent to the landlords.

The famine was another turning point in the history of Ireland. It started at full tide that wave of emigration which has never ceased, which has robbed the country of its most vigorous inhabitants and has made America a factor in the demand for Home Rule.

The history of Ireland during the latter half of the nineteenth century shows a constant brightening. There were periods when the darkness of oppression and violent reprisal settled over the land, but not for long. By the force of awakened public opinion, by outbursts of opposition that were simply unarmed rebellions and by campaigns of obstruction and agitation in the British Parliament the interest of English statesmen of ability was at last awakened and the govern-

ment compelled to inaugurate sweeping changes. These fifty years were, on the whole, a period of great reforms. The greatest, wisest and most important of all was the gradual extinction of landlordism, now under way. In addition, there were the disestablishment of the state church of the minority; several acts for the betterment of the condition of farmers, agricultural laborers and artisans; the granting of self-government in purely local affairs, and the founding of a national university.

The great famine of 1847-1849 left the country almost desolate and the people utterly worn out. The horrors of starvation and wholesale eviction had swelled the tide of emigration, draining the nation of its very lifeblood. For fifteen years Ireland remained steeped in misery. Gavan Duffy in 1851 sought to revive the national spirit through his Irish Tenant League, but the movement was betrayed by two of its members. Again, in 1858, a dangerous conspiracy was fomented in County Cork by James Stephens, one of the leaders of the rising of 1848. It was quickly suppressed, yet it served to uncover the perilous condition of the public mind. A far more serious attack was being prepared. While Stephens, with O'Donovan Rossa and others, formed the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Irishmen who had taken refuge in the United States organized Fenianism for an armed attack upon Great Britain. The movement was denounced by powerful members of the Catholic clergy and by the advocates of "constitutional methods," yet it made headway. An incident in 1861 showed the temper of the people. Cardinal Cullen refused to permit the body of one of the revolutionaries to be carried into a church, and it was followed to the grave by 50,000 men. Seizure of some of the Fenian leaders in 1865 did not quell the trouble. Stephens escaped. Scattered risings were suppressed, and a ship from America, with arms and men who had fought in the Civil War, was captured, but for three years the government was terrorized. There was a raid into Canada, Clerkenwell prison in London was dynamited, Chester Castle was attacked and an attempt made to rescue some prisoners in Manchester, resulting in the death of a policeman and the hanging of three Fenians. Futile as these outbreaks were in

themselves, they had the effects noted in connection with similar risings in preceding years; they aroused the attention of England, and were followed by immediate reforms. They led to the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland and the passage of the first great Land Act of 1870. That violence hastened these concessions we have the testimony of English statesmen.

"It has only been since the termination of the American war and the appearance of Fenianism," said Gladstone, "that the mind of this country has been greatly turned to the consideration of Irish affairs." Again, in 1868, when the great leader was asked why he had not dealt with disestablishment in 1866, he answered:

"For a perfectly plain and simple reason. In the first place, circumstances were not ripe then as they are now. Circumstances, I repeat, were not ripe, in so far as we did not know then so much as we know now with respect to the intensity of Fenianism."

"The attention of this country and the conscience of England," said Lord Dufferin, "were much stimulated, if not altogether awakened, by the fact of Fenianism."

"Few persons," wrote Lord Derby in 1881, "will now regret the disendowment of the Irish Church or the passing of the Land Act of 1870; but it is regrettable that, for the third time in less than a century, agitation, accompanied with violence, should have been shown to be the most effective instrument for redressing whatever Irishmen may be pleased to consider their wrongs."

It is worth while to note in passing what this church question was. The Anglican Church, with about 600,000 adherents out of the total population of nearly 8,000,000 in 1840, was the state Church. It was endowed with lands and with money, and supported, besides, by tithes levied against all the people. Of course, the greatest part of the tithes were paid by Catholics, and the few hundred thousand Presbyterians also had to contribute. In many parishes the rector of the endowed church actually had to borrow two or three worshippers from a neighboring parish in order to hold an occasional service, and so comply with the law which gave him a large salary. The people in 1830, and for several years fol-

lowing, made war upon the grotesque system. There were many scenes of riot and violence, and finally, in 1838, the government yielded and passed a tithe commutation act. This placed the burden of paying the tithes upon the landlords. Of course, the remedy was useless, for the landlords simply added the tax to the rents, and the people paid as before. It was not until 1869 that the state Church was disestablished and disendowed. It was "bought out" by the government, and while it was left with great wealth, it was stripped of political power and its support by the adherents of other churches stopped.

The Land Act of 1870, which first established the tenant's proprietary interest in improvements made by his own labor, has already been discussed at length. For generations the land question had been the subject of almost ceaseless agitation; as early as 1845 the English Devon commission had condemned the evil system and pointed out the remedy; but, as always, Ireland had to wait for many weary years for her rights. Though the statute marked a great advance, it was, on the whole, a failure, for it did not give the tenants fixity of tenure. For nine years a ceaseless agitation by constitutional methods was maintained, looking to further legislation for the solving of the land problem. All was in vain. England felt quite satisfied that she had done all that was necessary. Bill after bill was introduced, only to meet ignominious defeat. Meanwhile parallel movements—one for land reform, the other for Home Rule—were under way. In 1874 the Nationalists, under Isaac Butt, for the first time won a general election in Ireland, and four years later lined up under the powerful leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell. In 1879 Michael Davitt, perhaps the best beloved of the Irish leaders, induced Parnell to yoke the movements for land reform and Home Rule and to accept tacitly the aid of the revolutionary faction. The House of Lords in the following year rejected a bill favorable to the tenants. The country, already threatened with famine, was in the throes of an eviction campaign, and the desperate people, under guidance of the famous Land League, replied with boycotting, resistance to eviction and many forms of violence. It was in the midst of this anarchy that the government passed the Land Act of

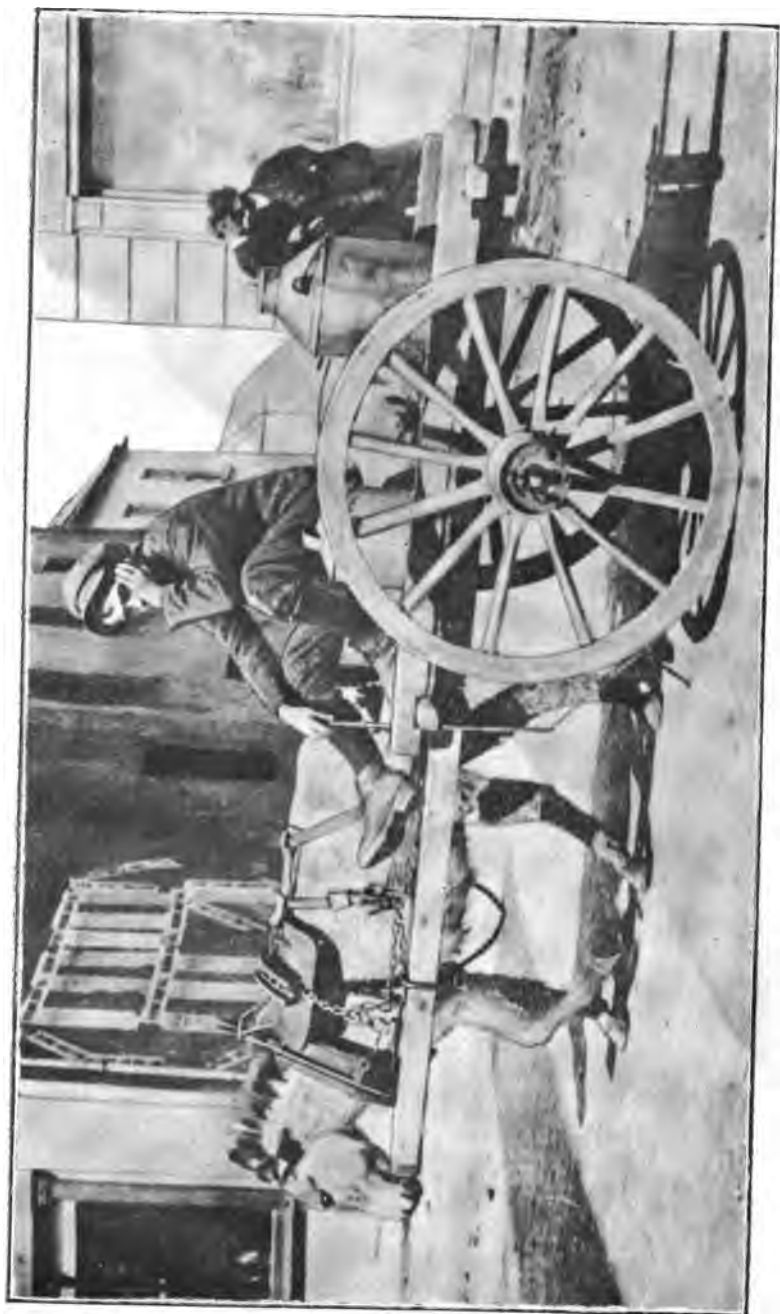
1881, and with it a severe coercion act. Neither was immediately effective; both the evictions and the agrarian outrages continued. The jails were filled with leaders of the movement and their followers. Parnell himself was incarcerated. Finally, in 1882, after two years of strife, Gladstone entered into negotiations with Parnell, still in prison, and coercion was abandoned. Unhappily, this great victory was all but annulled by the cowardly murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Under Secretary Burke, in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Lord Cavendish, just appointed Chief Secretary, was regarded as the bearer of a message of conciliation to Ireland. His assassination dealt a blow to "agitation by constitutional methods" from which it was slow to revive.

Gladstone, nevertheless, continued his magnificent efforts to achieve justice for Ireland. In 1886 he introduced a bill for land purchase—which to-day is under way—and for Home Rule. It was summarily rejected by the House of Commons. Living always close to the danger line, the people were at the time suffering want, owing to a fall in the prices of agricultural commodities. Payment of the rents demanded became an utter impossibility. Parliament having thrown out a relief bill offered by Parnell, the leaders inaugurated the famous "plan of campaign." Under this scheme tenants formally requested an abatement in the rents commensurate with the prevailing depression; upon the landlord's refusal, the tenants agreed to pay into a campaign fund the reduced rent offered, the money to be held for acceptance by the landlord, or, failing that, to be used as a war fund to resist eviction. The government made its inevitable reply—coercion—and for three years a fierce agrarian and political struggle raged in the land. Parnell meanwhile was made the victim of a villainous attack in England, the London Times accusing him of complicity in outrages, supporting the charges with documentary "evidence." Inquiry forced a confession from Richard Pigott, forger of the letters, and Parnell became a popular hero. Entering into a closer alliance with Gladstone, the leader was engaged in helping to formulate a Home Rule program, when the O'Shea divorce case suddenly involved him in political ruin, split the Irish people into warring camps and started dissensions which raged for

nearly ten years. Gladstone in 1893 carried a Home Rule bill through the House of Commons, but it was killed in the House of Lords. Meanwhile additional land acts, each advancing the emancipation of the tenants, had been passed. The terms of them all have been reviewed elsewhere, with the Act of 1903.

This, then, is the story of the nineteenth century in Ireland. Lacking the sanguinary horrors of the centuries preceding, it is still a story of gloom and failure. Those who forced through the Union of 1800 by the most despicable corruption affected to believe that it would solve the problem. As has been shown, it simply intensified the evils of the system, for it robbed the dominant minority of responsibility and saddled upon the country the burden of government by alien statesmen, who were ignorant of the country's needs and indifferent to its demands.

During the entire period England's policy was marked by vacillation and political cowardice. No intelligent Englishman now denies the justice of emancipation, of church disestablishment or of the land reforms that have been accomplished, yet each and every one of these was denounced and obstructed as a scheme of anarchy. Concessions were granted ungraciously and always hedged about with restrictions that made amending legislation necessary. Furthermore, in nearly every case there was the discreditable spectacle of a government obstinately refusing demands presented by orderly procedure and then hastening to grant them under the pressure of violent outbreaks. Thus it is that the twentieth century finds Ireland still unreconciled, still at enmity with England, still maintaining her demand for a complete overturning of the system of government which she condemns and repudiates.



A "MILKMAN."





## XXVI

### MISGOVERNMENT

Even the very brief and imperfect review which has been given of Ireland's history will serve to explain in large measure the present problems of the country and the persistent demand of the people for a radical change in the form of government. It remains now to describe that government as it is and to examine the claims put forth by the advocates of reform.

From every standpoint, the development of Ireland during the seven hundred years since the first invasion has been abnormal. Geographically shut off from contact with Europe, the country has ever been at the mercy of England. It was within the power of Great Britain to mold Ireland's destiny, to make her an integral part of the empire. But this she has failed to do. She never, until the present generation, sought to deal with the Irish as equals; she always regarded and treated them as an inferior race, and her whole purpose was to extinguish absolutely the institutions and even the race of the owners of the country and substitute the institutions and the race of the so-called Anglo-Saxon. It has been suggested that Ireland should have submitted gracefully; that, having failed to drive out the invaders, she should have accepted the inevitable and shared in the prosperity of the "conqueror." The fact is that Ireland never had a chance for honorable terms. From century to century rebellion and civil war were forced upon her. The conquest was never complete, yet England arrogated to herself the rights of a conqueror, and whenever those rights were challenged she provoked revolt by plantations, persecutions and massacres.

During every period of tranquillity the vigor of the Irish race was proved by the rapidity with which she assimilated the invaders. The Norman, Elizabethan and Crom-

wellian planters, many of them, became "more Irish than the Irish." This is a historical fact. But the country was never permitted to work out its own destiny. Fresh invasions, new plantations, new forms of oppression by landlords and the "garrison" invariably operated to split the races and provoke risings which could be put down by massacre and wholesale deportation and confiscation. The policy was not to organize and develop the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants, but to exploit it for the benefit of a few. Even when the violent methods of invasion and penal enactments had been abandoned, England continued the same policy by different means. It would seem as if she had been animated by the hope that eventually, through the effects of emigration and sheer national weariness, the Irish people would be so weakened that the problem would disappear. The record of the seven hundred years has been summed up in a few terse and terrible words by a member of Parliament, J. M. Robertson. As he is a Scotch Liberal, he will not be suspected of undue leanings toward Catholic Nationalism. Reviewing the history, he says:

"Seven centuries of rapine and violence. Carelessness alternating with ferocity. Not a gleam of humanity nor of political wisdom. Not even the wisdom of the peasant who takes care of his beast lest it perish."

As we have seen, the nineteenth century witnessed a change in methods, the sweeping away of many ancient abuses, the inauguration of great reforms. But still the basic evil remains. The government of Ireland in these opening days of the twentieth century is an anachronism, a perversion of liberty, a government of taxation without real representation, a cumbersome, costly and inefficient system of minority rule. Such statements as this are denounced by English Unionists as the falsest and most dangerous political heresy. Ireland, they say, is as free as England. She has 103 out of the 670 members of the imperial Parliament, which governs both countries equitably; she has trial by jury, the habeas corpus, and now even a system of popular and elective government in local affairs (since 1898). What more can she demand?

To answer this question, and to determine which of the

two views of the Irish government is correct, we must examine the system as it was established and as it is. The Act of Union of 1800, as has already been made clear, did not effect a real union between the two governments. It effected, rather, a union between the government of England and the minority in Ireland. The Irish Parliament—which with all its faults had been at least a free agent—was destroyed, and the imperial Parliament, with the Irish representation noted above, made supreme. But this did not alter the fact that Ireland remained under the domination of the “garrison” as much as in the days of Cromwell. The minority was all but absolute. Their wishes were paramount with Parliament. It took twenty-nine years to win religious equality, solemnly promised in 1800. It was not until 1869 that the burden of the Established Church was lifted. It was not until 1870 that the first attempt was made to reform the intolerably vicious land system. To illustrate what the trend of government was during the nineteenth century, a record has been made of the principal acts of Parliament affecting Ireland between 1829 and 1879. The following table shows the number of bills for the relief of tenants unsuccessfully introduced in the years named:

1829.....	1	1853.....	2
1830.....	1	1855.....	1
1831.....	1	1856.....	1
1835.....	1	1858.....	1
1836.....	2	1871.....	1
1845.....	2	1872.....	1
1846.....	2	1873.....	2
1847.....	1	1874.....	4
1848.....	2	1875.....	2
1849.....	1	1876.....	3
1850.....	2	1877.....	2
1851.....	1	1878.....	5
1852.....	1	1879.....	5

In a period of fifty years, then, we find forty-eight bills for the benefit of the suffering tenants introduced in the imperial Parliament. Not a single one of them was passed. During the same period there were forty-eight coercion acts, each establishing for the time being a form of martial law which placed the people at the mercy of magistrates appointed by Dublin Castle. During the nineteenth century there were

eighty-seven of these acts. Three words fairly describe the course of the government of Ireland during that century. Corruption branded the so-called Union; coercion was the remedy applied for fifty years to economic evils; conciliation was the method of the last thirty years. Corruption and coercion have been done away with to a large extent, discredited by their failure and condemned by public opinion. Conciliation has accomplished much in the way of reform, but it leaves the basic problem of misgovernment unsolved.

"Who (or what) rules Ireland?" asks R. Barry O'Brien, in an exhaustive work recently issued. "It may be the English cabinet; it may be Dublin Castle; it may be the 'Irish' boards; it may be all three combined; but it is not the Irish people."

This is from an Irish writer, but the statement is strictly and impartially true. Whatever the government of Ireland may be, it is not self-government. The people are ruled by forces over which they exercise no control, which are really irresponsible. We can take the testimony of Joseph Chamberlain. In 1885 he said:

"An Irishman cannot move a step, he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal or educational work, without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign government and without a shade or shadow of representative authority."

We can take the testimony of James Bryce, once Chief Secretary for Ireland, now British Minister to the United States, author of "The American Commonwealth."

"The English government in Ireland," he wrote in 1883, "is still practically a foreign government. It seems to them (the Irish) an external power, set in motion by forces they do not control, conducted on principles which may or may not be good, but which are not their principles."

These utterances are as true to-day as when they were written, except that since 1898 there has been a form of Home Rule in strictly local affairs. The root of the whole matter is that Ireland is governed by men who are foreign in race, religion and political sympathies. In an ordinary discussion of this kind a reference to religion would have no place, but it must be remembered that the very system inflicted upon Ireland makes such reference necessary. During the last

hundred years from three-fourths to four-fifths of the population has been Catholic. During that period there have been thirty-two Lords Lieutenant—several having held office more than once—not one of whom was a Catholic; fifty Chief Secretaries, not one a Catholic; twenty Under Secretaries, three being Catholics. Four of the Lords Lieutenant, seven of the Chief Secretaries and four of the Under Secretaries have been at least partially sympathetic toward the great mass of the Irish people; the others have been openly contemptuous of and antagonistic to the race they were appointed to govern.

In the face of such a record as this, such a deliberate and long-continued policy of governing a people without regard to their wishes, it is idle to protest that the religious element should be excluded from the discussion. The religious element was interjected by England, and for centuries has been the very foundation of English rule; it will be eliminated when the religious test for governmental positions is abandoned in practice as well as in theory and when the majority of the people of Ireland have fair representation. This does not mean that the appointment of Catholics to government offices would solve the problem; in fact, the patriotism of such appointees is often under suspicion. What the Irish want is Irish appointments (Catholic and Protestant) by an Irish national government.

An inevitable result of the system—the invasions and plantations from the twelfth to the eighteenth century and the Dublin Castle government of to-day—has been to divide the people into two hostile camps. It should be observed that the separation is not one of race, for the chemistry of time has fused English, Norman, Danish and Celtic strains inextricably; nor is it to be defined strictly by religious test, since there are powerful Catholics with the minority, and many of the most famous leaders of the majority have been Protestants. The division is rather material than racial or religious. It is largely a matter of possession. Those who have for centuries held the land, the wealth and the political power of the country are determined to keep all they can of what they consider their rights; those who have been suppressed, excluded, discriminated against, are fighting to establish a fairer, more democratic system, which will give them

the share in the government to which their numbers entitle them.

Geographically, the division is the northeastern part of the province of Ulster against almost all the rest of Ireland. Numerically, it is one-fourth of the people against three-fourths. Politically, it is Unionism against Nationalism—the policy of perpetuating the present system against the policy of establishing a free Irish Parliament.

Those who uphold the existing form of government, including Dublin Castle, with all its hoary evils, are the modern representatives of the "garrison" of old. Among them will be found most of the landlords, the exceptions being such broad-minded men as the Earl of Dunraven. With these reactionary descendants of the "planters" upon whom various sovereigns conferred lands confiscated from the Irish stand a horde of followers—lawyers, agents, bailiffs and other employes; also a large number of the prosperous middle class, manufacturers, business men, attorneys, and so on, who, like their forefathers, have found profit and security in clinging to the skirts of the ruling oligarchy. A second and important section of the Unionist group is made up of the Ulster Scotch, descendants of the settlers planted there by James I and William III on lands seized from the original owners. Altogether, there are about 1,250,000 of these Unionists. They are prone to insist that they are not Irishmen, but British loyalists; they are, in fact, more loyalist than the King, more English than the folk across the channel. By "loyalty" they do not mean devotion to the country where most of them were born, where they reside and make their living, but loyalty to the Union, to the system under which they impose their will upon three-fourths of the inhabitants of the country.

Incidentally, it may be said that Ulster presents a problem distinct from all the rest of Ireland. It is infinitely more prosperous. As a center of manufacturing it rivals the factory districts of England. The people—we are speaking of the northeastern part—are better fed, better housed and in every way more thriving than those of most of the rest of the country. These facts constitute one of the most popular arguments of Unionism. All this prosperity, it is declared, is due to the religious training of the people. The great

manufacturing interests are said to be the products of Protestant intelligence, while the poverty and the lack of manufacturing elsewhere are the inevitable results of Catholic ignorance and shiftlessness.

There may be something in the argument; at least it may be conceded that there is more thrift, more mechanical genius, more artisanship, in the Scotch character than in the Irish. But it should be remembered that for hundreds of years the former were sedulously favored by legislation, while the latter were deliberately excluded by statutes from the free exercise of trade and industry. Ulster, as part of the Ascendency, benefited by every form of legislative encouragement which the "garrison" could devise; for a hundred years virtually every means of business and professional livelihood was closed to men not of the Ulster religion. Ulster thus obtained a lead which the rest of the country has never been able to overcome. Industries cannot be established offhand; they require a long time for development of natural resources and the training of skilled labor. During the period of discriminating protection to one class of the people they built up manufacturing interests which cannot be dislodged. They may well be proud of their success, but not to the extent of condemning as impotent their fellow-countrymen who suffered so long under the handicap of exclusion. The same discrimination ruled in agricultural affairs. From the beginning Ulster has enjoyed the inestimable advantage of tenant right under the "Ulster Custom." By this enactment the tenant in that section has always held a proprietary interest in improvements made upon his rented land by his own labor; it was not until 1870 that the same right was conferred on tenants throughout the rest of Ireland.

Yet Ulster, now so passionately "Loyalist," or anti-Irish, has twice been in arms. In 1782 Ulster was the backbone of the demand which won from England a free Parliament, and in 1798 Wolf Tone enlisted many Ulstermen as rebels. The Union of 1800, perpetuating, as it did, the ascendancy of Ulster in Irish affairs, made the province "loyal," and so it has stayed ever since. It is necessary to remark, however, that the term "Ulster," used politically, does not mean the whole province. In the first place, of the nine counties, Donegal,



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Cavan and Monaghan are almost exclusively Catholic, while in Tyrone, Armagh and Fermanagh Protestants and Catholics are about equally divided; it is only in Down, Antrim and Derry, and especially in the cities of Londonderry and Belfast, that the Protestants are in a great majority. The Nationalists now hold nearly half of Ulster's thirty-four seats in Parliament, whereas thirty years ago they had not a single one. They even have a member from Belfast, the stronghold of Orange opposition.

It is worth while, too, to note that among the Ulster Presbyterians two forces have always been at work, a racial tendency toward independence and democracy, and a strong religious feeling. The former made Ulster a foe of the landlord-ruled Irish Parliament and of the exactions of the state (Anglican) church in the form of tithes collected from Presbyterians; the latter grew into hatred of Catholicism. The landlords always made use of the conflict in principle; they overcame the tendency toward democracy by fomenting religious strife. Whenever it seemed likely that men of the two faiths might unite, even for so innocuous a purpose as obtaining land reform, the fires of religious passion were relighted and the two elements driven apart. Outbursts of fanaticism continue to this day, but they are growing less frequent and less bitter. There is hope that some day the spirit of democracy in Ulster will outgrow the spirit of intolerance and that the province will realize that it is better to be a part of a united Ireland than a tool of Toryism and reaction.

Meanwhile the "garrison"—the landlords, the social aristocracy and their supporters in northeastern Ulster—remains supreme. But it is doomed. The processes of evolution cannot be stayed, and evolution is making the "garrison" the vermiform appendix of the Irish political body. The "mercenaries of England and parasites of Ireland" have lost ground rapidly during the last forty years. The first blow was the disestablishment of the state church in 1869. In the very next year came the establishment of tenant right, the extension of the "Ulster custom" to all of Ireland. In 1881 the first move toward Land Purchase was made, and now the peasants are rapidly becoming landowners, and hence power-



THE CAPTURED HOUSE AFTER THE EVICTION IN KERRY, 1902.



ful factors in the country's development. In 1884 the franchise was extended; the voters now number fourteen per cent. of the population, whereas in 1832 they numbered only 1.19 per cent. And in 1898 the right of self-government (that is, Home Rule) in local affairs was won, establishing Nationalist authority in twenty-seven of the thirty-two counties. Yet while the "garrison" is gradually losing its grip, it still retains immense authority. It no longer dictates the laws, but it administers them. It is supreme in Dublin Castle, it dominates the judiciary, it controls the police and the local courts. It has only nineteen of the one hundred and three members of the House of Commons, but it has full sway in the administration in Ireland.

Slowly, but surely, it is passing away, and passing unhonored. Its exit from the stage is not graceful, not even dignified. Throughout its long ascendancy the landlord "garrison" fought every reform idea advanced for the better government of the country: religious emancipation, church disestablishment, tenant right, land purchase, educational equality, extension of the franchise, local government. In fighting the inevitable transfer of the land to the people it haggles to wring the last possible shilling of purchase money. In opposing Home Rule it clings desperately to the "right" of minority rule. It offers nothing constructive, for Unionism is but the negation of Nationalism.

Against this reactionary element are arrayed the great mass of the Irish people. They are now completely united. Sinn Fein, an organization of some strength, opposes parliamentary action, despite the remarkable accomplishments of the last generation, and the advocates (in theory) of "physical force" are also contemptuous. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the national spirit of Ireland is represented in the work of the Irish Parliamentary Party and its supporting organization, the United Irish League, under the able leadership of John E. Redmond. For twenty-five years the party has been in Parliament, but not of it; sometimes obstructing, sometimes compromising, sometimes failing, but almost always going forward. Since 1900 it has been united, and is the most compact, most ably directed force in the House of Commons to-day.

## XXVII

### DUBLIN CASTLE

In pursuing a study of the government of Ireland, against which the people maintain an unceasing protest, we find it characterized in rather strong terms of disapprobation. Denunciation from Nationalist critics may be taken for granted; more weight, perhaps, may be given to the utterances of men less directly interested.

"I say the time has come," declared Joseph Chamberlain several years ago, "to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle, to sweep away altogether the alien boards of foreign officials and to substitute for them a genuine Irish administration for purely Irish business."

"The government of Ireland," declared Lord Rosebery, "is the most inefficient government in the whole world."

"Dublin Castle is not merely a foreign power," writes L. Paul-Dubois, a noted French historian, "it is at once hostile, anti-democratic, mercenary and irresponsible."

"Irish administration," said Lord Dunraven, "is the most costly and least efficient in the world. We are governed as no other people in the world are governed. Castle government is not democratic, it is not despotic, it is not an oligarchy. No one has any control over these Irish boards. No one can say that such a form of government is suitable to the needs of the country or the age in which we live."

"A chaotic anachronism," was the terse description of Dublin Castle by Sir West Ridgeway, who was Under Secretary—that is, virtual head of the Castle government—from 1887 to 1892. Finally, I shall quote just one Irish Nationalist, to show that Nationalism is not a matter of religion. Alfred Webb, who died in July, 1908, was bred a Quaker and throughout all his long life maintained the simplicity, dignity and moral courage of the society to which

he belonged. He was treasurer of the United Irish League, and for several years was the unopposed representative in Parliament of an overwhelmingly Catholic constituency. Here are some of his utterances:

"Where else but in Ireland do men plume themselves on esteeming their fellow-countrymen unfit for the management of their own affairs?"

"Time has belied every evil prognostication regarding the character and capacity of the Irish people."

"The difference between Ireland and other countries invaded by the Anglo-Saxon is that in Ireland the natives have withstood the efforts to annihilate or assimilate them, or make them in thought part of the conquering state; their own traditions, and not those of the conquerors, still animate and inspire them."

"Until Great Britain restores to us that of which she has robbed us—self-government—her desire that we should forget the past is an insult to our intelligence."

Now, what is this system of government which calls forth such unsparing denunciation? How does it differ from the government of England and Scotland, which causes no such wholesale opposition? The basis of it is the Act of Union of 1800. That Act, forced upon Ireland against its will, effected a union only of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland—or, rather, it submerged the legislature of the latter in the Imperial legislature. It did not effect a union as regards the civil law, the judiciary or the administration. The administration in Ireland to-day remains just about as English and as anti-Irish as it was in 1800 and before. It centers in Dublin Castle, and the name of that institution is the popular and accurate designation of the power that controls the destinies of Ireland.

Dublin Castle, physically speaking, is a collection of buildings in the heart of Dublin. It is the palace of the Viceroy, or Lord Lieutenant; it is also the seat of administration, a military depot and headquarters of the constabulary and secret police. Administratively speaking, Dublin Castle includes many other buildings throughout Dublin, housing various departments, as well as some hundreds of barracks, depots and other appurtenances throughout the country, with

all the officials and machinery of the government. At the head of Dublin Castle is the Viceroy, invariably a Protestant peer, either English or Scotch or Irish. He is appointed by the Crown, and in turn appoints a Privy Council of about sixty members, consisting of royal personages, retired chief secretaries, high judges and other persons of distinction. This is an advisory body, but also exercises certain judicial functions. The Lord Lieutenant, however, is largely a figurehead, his chief office being to preside over official society, sign proclamations and generally act as representative of the sovereign.

The real head of the government is the Chief Secretary for Ireland, a member of the imperial Parliament and responsible to it, and holding a seat in the cabinet. A new Chief Secretary is appointed—nominally by the Crown, but really by the party in power—with each party change in England, or oftener than that. This means that the responsible head of the Irish government is changed about once in every two years, so that no incumbent ever has time, if he has the inclination, to formulate and put in operation a definite, helpful policy.

In these two offices may be observed the most important differences between the government of Ireland and that of Great Britain. In the larger country the real ruler is the Premier, who is invariably the most popular and influential man in the party which has carried the preceding election. The Premier is the choice of the people, the representative of their will; not even the sovereign can prevent his taking and exercising the vast authority of the office. In the same way every member of the cabinet, each of whom is head of an important department, is virtually appointed by the people and is actually responsible to them. In direct contrast with this condition, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is named by the Crown without the slightest reference to the wishes of the Irish people. The Chief Secretary, too, is thrust upon them, and while sometimes he is sympathetic, he can never be anything but a foreigner. He distinctly is not the choice of the people, and the machinery of Dublin Castle is such that he never is free to carry out policies which he may advocate. The Under Secretary is in some respects more powerful than

the Chief who appoints him. He resides in Dublin and is the actual director of the Castle machine, since for the greater part of the year the Chief Secretary is attending Parliament in London. The Under Secretary likewise is appointed without any regard to the desires of the inhabitants of Ireland.

Under these three officials—one a figurehead, one a member of the English cabinet, one a resident secretary, all appointed by the British government—the affairs of Ireland are administered by a great nest of bureaus, departments and boards. There are sixty-seven of them—sixty-seven costly, complicated, irresponsible bodies conducting the governmental business of the poorest nation in Europe, and not a single one of them within the remotest reach of public opinion! As an illustration of what the Irish government is, I give a list of the “sixty-seven varieties”:

Lord Lieutenant's Household, Chief Secretary's Office, State Paper Department, Office of Arms, Treasury Remembrancer, National School Teachers' Superannuation Office, Conservators of Fisheries, Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks, General Prisons Board, Office of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums, Public Loan Fund Board, Royal Irish Constabulary Office, Dublin Metropolitan Police Board Office.

Local Government Board, Board of Trade, Customs, Inland Revenue (Stamp and Tax, Excise and Estate Duty Offices), Stationery Office, Intermediate Education Board, General Valuation and Boundary Survey Office, Board of Public Works, Civil Service Commission, Land Commission, Land Estates Commissioners, Land Office of the Public Trustee, National Gallery, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Fisheries Office, Veterinary Department, College of Science, School of Art, Science and Art Museum, National Library.

Board of National Education, General Register Office, Congested Districts Board, Registry of Deeds, Postoffice Department, Geological Survey, Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests, Commissioners of Education in Ireland (not the same as the Board of National Education), Ordnance Survey, Inspectors of Factories, Auditor's Office of War Department, Royal Naval Reserve Office, Woods and Forests Office, Public Record Office, Joint Stock Companies' Registry Office, Registrar of Friendly Societies, Office of the Royal University, Commissioners of Lighthouses, Lunacy Department, Crown and Hanaper Office, Local Registration of Title Office, Record and Writ Office, Consolidated Taxing Office, Consolidated Accounting Office, Chancery Registrar's Office, Principal Registry Office of Probate, King's Bench Division Office, Lord Chancellor's Court, Master of the Rolls Court, Chancery Division Court, Land Judges' Court, Bankruptcy Court and Admiralty Court.



One fact is so vital to an understanding of the case that reiteration cannot be avoided. Not one of these bureaux, offices and departments is responsible to the people of Ireland. Some of them are responsible directly to the British government; some are merely local branches of English departments; some are responsible in theory to the Chief Secretary; but none of them has anything to fear from or any respect for the public opinion of the country whose affairs they direct. There have been in recent years some able and conscientious Chief Secretaries, such as John Morley, Gerald Balfour, James Bryce and the present incumbent, Augustine Birrell; but it is quite obvious that they have been helpless in the grasp of the Dublin Castle machine. With its intricate tangle of red tape, its horde of more than 100,000 permanent officials and employes, its independent and irresponsible Chief Secretaries, Dublin Castle rules Ireland according to its own sweet will, and Dublin Castle represents the minority and despises the majority as did the cliques of land-grabbing adventurers in the days of the "plantations."

In Great Britain each department is represented in the House of Commons by a Minister, placed there by the people of England or Scotland, as the case may be, and instantly within reach—through "parliamentary questions"—of the public opinion of the two countries. All the departments of Ireland are represented by one man, the Chief Secretary, and he is directly responsible, as president, for no fewer than twenty of them. Were each of his days a week long he could never master the details of these departments; he must accept the reports of the permanent officials, who are quite out of reach of the people. Hence it is that Ireland is still ruled actually by the creatures of the "garrison," men who, when they are not absolutely hostile to public opinion, are perfectly indifferent to it.

Next to the irresponsible despotism of Dublin Castle, the greatest evil of the system is its extravagance. Ireland, the poorest country in western Europe, pays more per capita to be misgoverned than any other country pays for good administration. Since the Union of 1800 the taxation contributed by Ireland has steadily increased, while the population and prosperity during the last fifty years have as steadily

decreased. In 1800 the taxation was \$15,000,000; in 1815, \$32,500,000; now Ireland contributes about \$55,000,000 to the Imperial treasury. Of this latter sum, nearly \$40,000,000 is spent upon the government of Ireland. For nearly fifty years the inequalities of the system of taxation have been agitated. In 1864 the chairman of a committee of inquiry declared that "Ireland is the most heavily taxed country in Europe and England the most lightly taxed." A commission in 1895, composed of Ulster Unionists, as well as Nationalists, made a similar report. It found that Ireland was overtaxed \$12,500,000 a year; since then taxes have increased heavily. It is a matter of official record that Ireland contributes one-eleventh as much as Great Britain, while her taxable capacity is much less than one-twentieth. Moreover, while in Great Britain one-half the taxes collected are direct, in Ireland more than seventy per cent. are indirect—that is, nearly three-fourths of the tax burden falls upon food and other necessities of the poor. The per capita taxation was \$5 in 1850; \$12.50 in 1900.

Now as to the cost of the government which is so unsatisfactory to Ireland. The country must support the Viceroy, or Lord Lieutenant, whose salary is twice that of the President of the United States, and his expensive household. It must support the sixty-seven irresponsible departments we have named, with their 100,000 or more officials and employes, including 11,000 police. Perhaps comparisons will best illustrate the extravagance of the Irish administration. Scotland should afford a fair comparison, as her population is about the same—4,472,000 in Scotland, against 4,458,000 in Ireland. Comparison will also be made with England and Wales.

Scotland's government costs less than \$30,000,000 a year; Ireland's, nearly \$40,000,000, though the population is less.

Scotland supports 963 officials, whose incomes exceed \$800 a year; Ireland supports 4539 officials of the same class—and none of them chosen by the people.

Scotland pays \$2,500,000 annually for police; Ireland pays \$7,500,000.

Scotland's prison board, caring for 2900 convicts, costs

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\$435,000 annually; Ireland's prison board, with 2500 convicts, costs \$535,000 annually.

Scotland's courts in 1907 cost \$1,000,000; Ireland's in the same year cost \$1,840,000.

England pays for government \$5.75 per capita; Scotland, \$5.80; Ireland, \$8.50.

Of England's national income, one-fortieth is expended on her home government; of Ireland's, more than one-tenth.

It is perfectly clear, then, that Ireland's government, unsatisfactory as it is to the people, and lacking almost wholly the virtue of representing public opinion, is more than fifty per cent. costlier than the government of England or Scotland. And the pressure of the burden is infinitely greater because Ireland is the poorest of the three countries. During the last century, while the cost of government has so rapidly increased, the population of England has been multiplied by four and that of Scotland by three, while Ireland's has decreased one-fourth. During the last sixty years the population of England has doubled, while that of Ireland has fallen fifty per cent. In England the average weekly wage of agricultural laborers is \$4.65; in Scotland, \$4.80; in Ireland, \$2.72. Comparing Ireland and England, the population of Ireland is one-seventh, yet her railway passengers number only one-thirty-seventh and her freight traffic only one-seventeenth. Poorest of the three countries, Ireland bears relatively the heaviest burden.

But in examining the cost of government, which is one of the most serious counts in the indictment against the present system, the most glaring inequalities are undoubtedly to be found in the police records. In the policing of Ireland we find the policy of Dublin Castle in full flower. It should be understood, first, that the Royal Irish Constabulary is quite different from the police force as it is known in England, Wales, Scotland and America. It is infinitely more than an organization for the preservation of the peace and the prevention and detection of crime; it is, in fact, a military force, an army of occupation, a reinforcement of the regular army. It consists of more than 11,000 men, armed with carbines and bayonets, swords and revolvers, and occupies some hun-



ROYAL CONSTABULARY AT THE EVICTION IN KERRY, 1909.



dreds of strongly fortified barracks throughout the country. In addition, there are supplementary forces in Dublin, Belfast and Derry. But the chief thing to observe is that this army of occupation, miscalled a police force, is controlled by Dublin Castle; that is to say, by the "foreign" government. The people of Ireland have absolutely nothing to do with the Royal Irish Constabulary, except to pay them. While the expenditure is paid out of the imperial treasury, it is charged, of course, to Ireland, and becomes a burden upon the Irish taxpayer. The Dublin Castle commanders of the force are English army officers. They direct it and control it without the slightest reference to the popular will and without any responsibility to the public. Now let us compare the size and the cost of this irresponsible organization with the size and cost of the police in other parts of the empire. Here are the figures for 1906:

	Population.	Police.
England and Wales.....	34,547,000	46,027
Ireland .....	4,387,000	11,126

Another way to look at it is this: In Scotland there is one policeman to every 857 of population; in England, one to 750; in Ireland, one to 394. Now as to the cost. It has already been shown that Scotland pays for her police \$2,500,000 a year; Ireland, \$7,500,000. Leaving out London and Dublin, the two capitals, England's police cost fifty-six cents per capita of population; Ireland's, \$1.64. There must be some very good reason for these extraordinary discrepancies—for maintaining in Ireland much more than twice as many police, in proportion to population, as are maintained in England, Wales or Scotland. The obvious inference would be that crime is rampant in Ireland and that only an exceptional force of armed men could keep the violent tendencies of the people within bounds.

I have no personal experiences to bear out such a charge. I have traveled rather extensively in Ireland, have studied the daily life of the country at fairly close range and have kept in touch with the newspapers, friendly and unfriendly to the majority of the people. Yet I have observed no extraordinary inclination to crime, nor do I recall any publications which indicate such a tendency. But my testimony, after all, as that of a mere visitor, is not of much value.

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The uncolored and incontrovertible facts will be found in government reports. And these show that in Ireland crime is relatively a great deal less frequent and less serious than in Great Britain.

"Nothing could be falser," writes L. Paul-Dubois, "than the prejudice which paints Ireland as a pandemonium of brigands and assassins. There is no professional criminal class in Ireland. There may have been a considerable volume of crime during the agrarian war, but I do not know a country in Europe in which the figures are lower in normal times. In 1901, for instance, an average year, there were in England thirty-three convictions for every 100,000 inhabitants, in Scotland forty-one and in Ireland only twenty-seven. Every year sees the closing of some unused prison, and at the Assizes, as often as not, the judge receives from the sheriff the traditional pair of white gloves, which indicate that his white hands will not have to be raised in passing sentence on any one."

But this is not official. Let us consult the government's "Judicial Statistics (Criminal)" for England and Wales and for Ireland. "As to whether crime is increasing or decreasing," says the report for 1905, "the most trustworthy answer is to be found in the return as to indictable offenses. They include all the most serious forms of crime. \* \* \* Non-indictable offenses include very many which partake of a civil character." Taking the year 1906, when the population of England and Wales was 34,547,000 and of Ireland 4,387,000, we find indictable offenses returned as follows:

	Number. Per 100,000.	
England and Wales .....	91,665	265
Ireland .....	9,465	215

In the official report for the year 1907 we find this record:

	Crimes. Per 100,000.	
England and Wales.....	98,822	283
Ireland .....	9,418	220

These figures show not only that crime in Ireland is from twenty to twenty-five per cent. less than across the channel, but that increase from year to year is less rapid. On this point the 1907 official reports say:

(England and Wales.) "Crimes proper (indictable offenses) have shown a marked increase, the number of indictable offenses reported to the police being greater than in any year since 1882."

(Ireland.) "In the year 1907 the indictable offenses for the whole of Ireland, which had fallen from 9728 in 1905 to 9465 in 1906, declined to 9418 in the period under notice."

Part of the reduction, it should be observed, may be traced to the decreasing population; none the less, the comparison is wholly favorable to Ireland. There is interest also in examining the character of the crimes in the two countries. Following are the official figures for 1907:

	England-Wales.	Ireland.
Murder .....	132	23
Manslaughter .....	141	41
Felonious and malicious wounding.....	1,372	167
Burglary, robbery and housebreaking....	10,616	732
Larceny of cattle .....	457	93
Crimes against morals .....	1,724	118

This table shows that relatively Ireland records a large number of murders and manslaughter cases; most of them were due to drink. Her record in robberies and crimes against morals is less than half of the proportionate record in England and Wales. Perhaps enough has been said to show that Ireland is not a crime-ridden country; that, on the contrary, it is more law-abiding than England itself. If further evidence is needed, we may note that the only jails in Wexford and Donegal counties were closed several years ago; that of two jails in Tipperary, one is now used as a convent, in which Sisters of Charity give technical instruction to poor girls; and that an unused jail in Mullingar, County Westmeath, is now the scene of meetings of the United Irish League. Members of the organization rather enjoy the humor of assembling in the building where a good many of them were imprisoned for making speeches against the government.

If the huge force of police is not needed, then, to cope with an exceptionally large criminal class, why is Ireland compelled to support such a body? The reason is that the Constabulary was founded in 1836 to support the landlords



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and enforce their demands, and has been used chiefly for that purpose ever since. The police have been turned over bodily to the landlords in the various wars against the tenants. They have been used as prosecutors, as well as preservers of order. I have seen uniformed men at public meetings taking shorthand notes of speeches; in countless cases, when the tenor of the speeches did not please the officers in command, the armed force dispersed the crowd, using batons on the heads of the audience. When touring the country on investigations I have been honored by having a policeman dog my footsteps. Members of the force are also detailed to protect landlords, their agents and the occupiers of "evicted" farms against the tenants; I heard of no case of their protecting a tenant against a landlord. They have been used also for the intimidation of peasants and to assist the civil forces in evicting tenants and destroying their homes. More than that, the official records are stained with proof that police officers literally incited, and in some cases themselves committed, the most despicable crimes, then charged them to innocent men and caused convictions upon perjured testimony.

Physically, the Royal Irish Constabulary is a splendid body of men, and there is no doubt that the vast majority of the rank and file are honest, courageous fellows, carrying out the orders of their superiors faithfully and with no more violence than is necessary. None the less, this armed force is an intolerable burden to Ireland, and its absolute control by the irresponsible clique in Dublin Castle is one of the strongest indictments of the system of misgovernment which is crumbling before the assaults of public opinion.

## XXVIII

### THE SYSTEM A FAILURE

These letters have traced, at considerable length, the historical development of the Irish question; have described the remarkable economic changes for the better wrought by the remedial legislation of the last forty years, and have set forth some of the more obvious evils and defects of the present system of government. This system the Irish people have been fighting for more than one hundred years to overturn. The Union of 1800, as has been shown, was forced upon the country against the popular will, through the debauchery of the landlord-owned Irish Parliament. Its terms have never been accepted by Ireland. The statute of limitations has never been permitted to run against the demand that real Home Rule shall be restored to the nation. Settlement of the land problem, that condition which more than anything else has retarded the development of Ireland, is proceeding slowly but surely to a successful culmination. The operation of the Land Purchase Acts and the magnificent work of the Congested Districts Board, both of which agencies will be made more effective by the land bill now pending, are transforming the agricultural population from tenants to proprietors. This change does more than open to the farming class—by far the largest class in Ireland—opportunities for prosperity and better living; it roots the people in the soil, tends to check the deadly drain of emigration and brings nearer the day when self-government can no longer be denied. It is proposed now to discuss the grounds upon which rests the Irish demand for Home Rule. Setting aside the theoretical right of a people to manage their own affairs, we shall examine it strictly from a practical standpoint.

First and foremost, English government of Ireland has

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proved a failure. For more than seven hundred years England has dominated her sister country; she has "conquered" her not once, but three or four times; she has imposed upon her English rulers, English laws, English institutions; she even cleared a large part of the country of its original owners and planted English and Scotch settlers in their room. Finally she destroyed the Irish Parliament, removed the seat of government from Dublin to Westminster, and for the last century has tried the experiment of ruling Ireland by a bureaucracy made up of representatives of the minority, men foreign in race and sympathy to the great mass of the people. And the end is failure. In increasing numbers have English statesmen of brains come to realize that the virtually unanimous testimony of students and historians is correct; the system is an irremediable failure, and there will be neither peace nor prosperity in the island until self-government is substituted for the complicated and costly machinery of alien rule.

It should not be difficult to determine the ill success of the present system, which, in truth, has comparatively few defenders outside the ranks of the most rabid landlords and their followers and those who uphold it on purely religious grounds. Governments, like individuals, must be judged by results. What conditions have been produced in Ireland by subjecting it to the rule fashioned in the Act of Union? A good government, a successful government, is one which preserves order and promotes the welfare and contentment of the whole people. Does the government of Ireland meet these tests? Let us see what has been the course of events during the last hundred years. In that period the population of England, of Scotland and probably of every other country in the world has steadily increased; the population of Ireland, which grew rapidly up to 1840, has as steadily declined. England's population has been multiplied by four, Scotland's by three, while Ireland's has declined one-fourth—one-half in the last sixty years. Here are the figures for Ireland, by decennial periods:

1801.....	5,500,000	1871.....	5,412,377
1841.....	8,175,124	1881.....	5,174,836
1851.....	6,552,385	1891.....	4,704,750
1861.....	5,798,967	1901.....	4,458,775

Remembering that the drain of emigration is due to the evils of the old land system, inflicted by England as part of her system, the loss may be fairly charged to misgovernment. This is justified further by the fact that the partial lifting of the curse of landlordism has appreciably checked emigration. In September, 1909, an official report noted the first increase in the population since 1840. Four million emigrants in sixty years—is that evidence of good government? Similarly, the economic condition of Ireland is inextricably bound up with the system of government forced upon the country, since for hundreds of years, as has been shown, the chief purpose of the system was to exploit Ireland for the benefit of England. The average wage of an agricultural laborer in England is \$4.56, in Scotland \$4.80 and in Ireland \$2.72. The average wages of all classes are just half what they are in England. Ireland is the fourth meat-producing country in the world and the sixteenth meat-eating. Every year 20,000 men and boys emigrate to England for the harvest season, to earn enough money to tide them over the winter. Throughout nearly the whole of Ireland there is an amazing lack of manufacturing. This is directly chargeable to misgovernment; indeed, the destruction of Irish industries was one of the most deliberate of the policies of England for two hundred years, and was carried out by means of carefully framed legislation.

"There was a time," says Arthur Balfour, the English statesman, "when the British Parliament thought they were well employed in crushing out Irish manufactures in the interests of the British producer."

Whenever Ireland established an industry and began to compete with English producers in the same line laws were made to strangle it. Agricultural products were the first to feel the blow. As early as 1663 a law was passed prohibiting all exports from Ireland to the colonies except victuals, servants, horses and salt, and prohibiting the sending of Irish cattle to England, this latter enterprise being denounced as "a public and common nuisance." Beef, pork, butter and cheese were subsequently excluded, and additional statutes stopped the exportation from Ireland to the English plantations of sugar, cotton, wool, tobacco, indigo, ginger and fus-

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tion. Under William III the export of wool and woollen manufactures from Ireland was prohibited, the penalty being forfeiture of goods and ship and heavy fines for each offense. By such legislation as this Irish manufacture of cotton, glass, iron and hats was also suppressed.

"One by one," wrote Lord Dufferin, "each of our nascent industries was either strangled in its birth or handed over, gagged and bound, to the jealous custody of the rival interests of England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed, and even the traditions of commercial enterprise have perished through desuetude."

That the stagnation of industry in Ireland is due to misgovernment, in fact, no attempt is made to deny. Corroborative evidence is found in the revival which followed the establishment of a free Irish Parliament in 1782. Almost immediately ruined factories were rebuilt, new ones sprang up, the urban population rose rapidly and everywhere skilled labor was put in training. But after the Union of 1800 there was as distinct and as rapid a decline. Stagnation and decay spread throughout industrial Ireland, and the conditions to-day have resulted.

Here it is necessary to go back a little. Opponents of Home Rule will admit that Ireland as a whole has suffered a decline in population, a heavy drain in emigration and an industrial relapse. But, they say, vehemently, all, or very nearly all, of the loss has been in the south and west; it is Nationalist Ireland that has suffered, because of the notorious ignorance and incapacity of the people; Ulster, on the contrary, has prospered continuously, because of the intelligence and thrift of its inhabitants. This view is highly interesting and quite worthy of examination. Here are the emigration figures for the four provinces for 1906:

Leinster .....	5,079	Munster .....	10,054
Connaught .....	7,880	Ulster .....	12,331

There is more rapid emigration at this time from Ulster, then, than from any other province. Taking a broader view, Ulster lost thirty-four per cent. of her population between 1841 and 1901, while all Ireland lost forty-five per cent. It appears, therefore, that Ulster has suffered with the rest of



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the country from the governmental conditions which reduce population. Ulster, of course, remains the chief industrial center, and is likely to retain its supremacy, for the reason that the skilled labor is available there and in no other part of the island. But gradual stagnation is visible there, too. Following are the number of persons employed in the textile industries in the years named:

1871.....	193,864	1891.....	129,884
1881.....	129,787	1901.....	109,588

Linen manufacture, by far the largest of the textile industries, employed 85,000 persons in 1891; it employs now about 70,000. The woolen industry shows a like decline.

Another test of good government is its effect upon the temper of the people. Good government produces peace and contentment. Since the Act of Union there have been three insurrections—in 1803, in 1848 and in 1867. And in order to forestall the retort that these outbursts were due to religious hatred of England, let us note that Emmet, in 1803, and Thomas Davis, John Mitchel and Smith O'Brien, in 1848, were Protestants. In addition to these armed risings, there has been a succession of unarmed rebellions against English authority, which English statesmen of to-day are compelled to acknowledge were forced upon the people by intolerable oppression.

Good government establishes civil and religious liberty. As evidence upon the former we find a Coercion Act for every year of the nineteenth century; that is, the suspension of trial by jury, free speech, a free press and virtually every other form of political freedom. Upon the matter of religious liberty we find that equality before the law was not granted until 1829, and that to-day discrimination on religious grounds permeates the government, the professional classes and every field of activity which the upholders of the present system control.

Good government means just taxation. Yet we have the testimony of an English commission that Ireland was overtaxed \$12,500,000 a year, in proportion to England, in 1895, and \$10,000,000 has been added to the taxation since then.

The very foundation stone of good government is fair



representation. Where Ireland stands in this regard has already been demonstrated. True, she has fair representation in the British Parliament, but in the executive, administrative and judicial departments in Ireland the power is in the hands of a reactionary minority, the great mass of the people having no voice whatever in these affairs.

Good government implies a judicial system responsive in some measure to public opinion and untainted by favoritism or class prejudice. The high courts of Ireland are dominated absolutely by the "garrison," while the minor judiciary is made up almost exclusively of landlords or their agents or sympathizers, men who, for the most part, are antagonistic to the people and in any event are quite out of reach of popular opinion.

By every test that can be applied the present system of governing Ireland is a failure. It is complicated, costly, irresponsible, incrustated with prejudices and injustices, a detriment to the advancement of the country and its people, because it is wholly removed from and antagonistic to the public opinion of the nation. No less is it a disadvantage to Great Britain. The Irish Parliamentary Party, as has been pointed out, is in Parliament, but not of it. The members frankly appear in that body as foreigners. Their sole purpose is to serve Ireland, to win for her every advantage they can, and frequently they accomplish their ends by hampering and obstructing the business of the Empire. They will continue to do this as long as they are there to represent Ireland's protest. Gladstone's Home Rule bills of 1886 and 1893 were defeated because they aroused the fears of English imperialists for the unity and security of the Empire. Statesmen of to-day are realizing that continuance of the system which breeds Irish hostility must be a far greater peril than the granting of autonomy would be. It is difficult to understand the theory that governing a people against their will makes them a source of strength, while giving them the form of government they desire would arouse enmity.

"After all," says L. Paul-Dubois, a sane and impartial observer, "is not Home Rule (call it by what name we will) the best of unionisms? Is it not the most solid basis and the

surest guarantee of Anglo-Irish union? England, moreover, cannot always deny to Ireland her rights, nor reserve all her severities for the sister isle and all her favors for the colonies. She cannot always allow the Irish question to remain an open sore, a factor of trouble between herself and that 'Greater Ireland,' the United States, whose friendship she has so long desired to win."

"But," say the Unionists, "Ireland is disloyal. She attacks the Imperial policies of England. She presents to the world a constant spectacle of turmoil and dissension. If she were loyal her demands might receive more kindly attention."

Surely this is a strange attitude, when the history of the British empire shows, as might be expected, that loyalty is the result, and not the forerunner, of self-government. Australia, South Africa, Canada—all went through the same experience as Ireland, except that, being farther from the seat of the Imperial government, they were able to enforce their demands more rapidly. They had their "treasons," plots and rebellions; they suffered coercion, imprisonments, executions. They had, too, their local "Ulsters," groups of ultra-loyalists who called heaven to witness that they alone represented public opinion, and bitterly opposed concessions to the majority on the ground that such a course meant the disintegration of the Empire. Yet in each case autonomy was granted, and with what result? That rebellion and opposition died down, loyalty became universal and the great British federation of to-day was built upon a foundation of self-government, justice and mutual esteem.

Let those who condemn Ireland for demanding Home Rule while opposing Imperial policies consider the case of Canada, as remarkable a parallel as may be found in history. There, as in Ireland, were two races and two religions, and they were separated by animosities far more bitter than to-day separate Nationalists and Unionists. England conferred upon the country, in response to agitation, a half-way compromise constitution. Upper Canada (now Ontario) and Lower Canada (now Quebec) had each an elected House of Assembly and a nominated "Senate." All execu-

tive power, however, remained with the appointed governor and his council, who were responsible to London and in no degree whatsoever to the people of Canada. Against this system there arose a fierce agitation, which for years kept the country in turmoil. Monster meetings were held, when Nationalist banners were flaunted and Nationalist sentiments flung in the face of the government. Coercion just as savage as in Ireland was applied. Meetings were proscribed, speakers arrested and imprisoned, newspapers suppressed.

During all this time the Canadian "Ulster" was, of course, active, loudly proclaiming its loyalty—to England, not to Canada—and calling upon the government to exterminate this propaganda of the majority and restore the rule of the minority. The whole trouble, they said—and how familiar it sounds!—was due to the fulminations of irresponsible agitators and the efforts of "a majority in numbers only" to dominate the "wealth, education and enterprise" of the country. In a final effort to quell the agitation England suspended the Canadian governmental system altogether. The effect was to consolidate the opposition and fan the embers of rebellion. In 1837, when the British empire was rejoicing over the ascent of Queen Victoria to the throne, Canada was in arms. The revolt was short-lived, but it was successful. England hastened to grant Home Rule, and for seventy years Canada, peaceful, loyal and prosperous, has been marching forward in the ranks of the free nations of the world.

The story of Canada presents every feature of that of Ireland—disaffection, a diminishing population, industrial stagnation, racial and religious strife, open rebellion—except that she won her rights, while Ireland has not. Canada to-day is unaffectedly loyal to Great Britain, while her government is wholly free. There is no hostility between the races, and sectarian animosity is negligible. A French Catholic, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, is Prime Minister, honored by all citizens. Canada is growing in wealth, power and national stature; Ireland, which stands to-day exactly where Canada stood before Home Rule was granted, is disaffected, harassed by differences, afflicted with poverty and misgovernment. What is the inevitable deduction?

It is found on the records of the Canadian Parliament, which again and again has urged the British government to grant to Ireland the Home Rule which Canada enjoys. It is found in the parliamentary records of every self-governing colony of the British empire to the same effect. It is found in the records of the British Parliament itself, not only in the speeches of such leaders as Gladstone and Bright, but in the passage of a Home Rule resolution through the House of Commons at this very session, supported by nearly five-sixths of the membership.

## XXIX

### HOME RULE TESTED

Against the Home Rule demand of Ireland, backed by the unanimous indorsement of the colonies, by public opinion throughout the world and by the great Liberal Party in England, what have the Unionists to offer? How do they attempt to justify their campaign to perpetuate a system of government which is so universally condemned and whose sole function is to make paramount the will of the minority? They present no argument except that it would be unfair to the minority to give the majority fair representation; that the "loyalists" would be oppressed by the majority, and an era of religious discrimination and persecution opened.

One cannot but marvel at the frankness of this attitude. Having forcibly held minority rule for some three hundred years, and having clung as long as they could to legal discrimination on religious grounds, and maintaining to-day a strict religious test, not only in affairs of government, but in professional and commercial activities, they complain bitterly that government upon a fairly representative basis will inflict upon them their own policies. If what they say were true, who will say that selfish rule by a majority is worse than selfish rule by a minority? But is it true? How much have the timorous supporters of the oligarchy to fear? They fought emancipation as an opening of the door to persecution; they fought extension of the franchise as an invitation to anarchy and spoliation; they have fought land reform and land purchase as desperate assaults upon property and stable government. Yet each of these, as every sane man knows, marked a step toward justice, equality and national prosperity. Now they make their last stand against Home Rule upon reasoning just as logical as that they advanced against the other changes.

What have they to fear? How much force is there in the plea that Home Rule would mean a reversal of the process of political and religious oppression? There is evidence upon which to base judgment.

In 1898 was passed an act conferring on the Irish people self-government in local affairs—with the exception of the judiciary and the police. Previous to that time public business in each county was in the hands of a grand jury appointed by the sheriff, that is, by Dublin Castle. This body, made up of men wholly unsympathetic to most of the people, and quite removed from popular influence, fixed the tax rate and conducted all local affairs, having sweeping administrative as well as judicial functions. Under the Act of 1898 the grand juries were restricted to such powers as they have in this country. Local administration passed into the control of elected county councils. There are thirty-three of these, and three hundred and two urban and rural district councils, besides city councils in Dublin, Belfast, Londonderry, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. All of these bodies are elected on a broad franchise, including women. Their operations are supervised by the Local Government Board, one of the departments of Dublin Castle.

The change from the old system, obviously, was revolutionary. It was the establishment of democracy—Home Rule—in local affairs. By the elections Nationalist authority has been placed in charge of the public business of twenty-seven of the thirty-two counties. The people of Nationalist Ireland and the people of the irreconcilable part of Ulster elect and control men of their own choice. Needless to say, the proposal to grant such a measure of self-government was bitterly denounced by the reactionary element. The great mass of the people, it was said, were quite unfit for the responsibilities of managing public affairs. Once the majority obtained the rights of free citizens they would start the country on the road to ruin by their tendencies toward extravagance and corruption and their mad desire to exterminate the minority.

Never were prophecies of gloom more picturesquely made ridiculous by events. For eleven years Ireland has had Home Rule in local affairs, and the testimony, not of the

people, but of the sternly critical Local Government Board and of Unionist leaders, is that the new order of things is a triumphant success. Conduct of the local bodies is not, to be sure, the pink of perfection; here and there time is wasted in acrimonious discussions and in anti-English demonstrations. But there has been no extravagance, there has been no oppression or persecution and there has been real capacity for economical and efficient government.

Now, this is important. Granting to Ireland self-government in local affairs was to be a test of the ability of the people to manage the larger activities of national government. Lord Salisbury, in 1885, predicted that the result of conferring local authority upon the people would be mismanagement, corruption and intolerance. Gerald Balfour, the English member, who had charge of the Local Government Act of 1898, on the other hand, declared that "if the councilors did their work with business capacity, and in a spirit of toleration, it would mitigate one of the arguments which has always been felt to tell heavily in England against Home Rule."

What has been the outcome? The strongest testimony, naturally, must be that of the Local Government Board, which has supervisory powers over the county councils and other local bodies, and which is thoroughly Unionist in its sympathies, being one of the departments of Dublin Castle. At the end of the first year's trial of local self-government, in its report for 1900, this body said:

"The predictions of those who affirmed that the new local bodies intrusted with the administration of a complex system of county government would inevitably break down have certainly not been verified. On the contrary, the county and district councils have, with few exceptions, properly discharged the statutory duties devolving upon them. Instances have no doubt occurred in which these bodies have, owing to inexperience and to an inadequate staff, found themselves in difficulties, and have had to receive some special assistance from us in regulating their affairs; but this has been of rare occurrence, and we are confident that before the term of office of the first councils elected under the act expires the new machinery will be working very smoothly throughout Ireland."

After another year's trial the board reported, in 1901:

"Our further experience enables us to confirm the statement in our last report as to the satisfactory manner in which the duties of the county councils and rural district councils have been dis-



**A RELIC OF THE PAST.**



**A HOME OF TODAY.**





charged. No doubt in some instances there has been action, or sometimes inaction, which did not seem to accord with the intentions of the Legislature; but, apart from such exceptional instances, their duties have been satisfactorily and creditably discharged by the councils and their officials throughout Ireland, and the councils, we are glad to observe, appear to recognize the zeal and ability with which they are served by their official staff."

In 1902 the board had this to say:

"The term of office of the first county councils and rural districts councils, on whom, with their officers, rests the credit of having successfully assisted in carrying the Local Government Act into operation, expired in June, and the new councils, with the experience of the past three years, will no doubt endeavor to bring the system into a state of even greater efficiency.

"Attention has been directed to certain political differences, which have been introduced by some of the smaller bodies into their ordinary business transactions, with reference to the appointment of officers and the giving of contracts, but it is only fair to state that these cases have been quite the exception and not the rule; they have been promptly dealt with, and we feel confident that the conduct of their affairs by the various local authorities and their officials will continue to justify the delegation to them of the large powers transferred to their control by the Local Government Acts."

In 1903 the report was virtually the same; since that date I find no general comment upon the work of the local bodies, the justice and efficiency of the system being taken for granted, after several years' trial; but in specific details the supervising board commends the industry and intelligence displayed.

Economy and efficiency, therefore, mark the administration of these elected bodies. But how about the predicted oppression of the minority in the large number of districts where Nationalists far outnumber Unionists? How has the minority fared under Home Rule as applied to local affairs? To what extent have religious differences operated against the opponents of Nationalism, who said that those differences would cause discrimination and persecution?

Figures are at hand showing the status of the elected bodies in 1907, since which there has been little change. At that time the county councils had the political complexion of the inhabitants of the various districts. It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise. Where nine-tenths of the people are Nationalists, it is not surprising to find the same proportion of Nationalists on the county council. Where

there is a heavy preponderance of Unionists, most of the councilors naturally are of that party. Each council, moreover, appoints several score of public officers. Here there is abundant opportunity for "playing politics" and for the exercise of discrimination upon political and religious grounds.

Yet the record completely refutes the assertion that Home Rule in local affairs means the exclusion of the minority from public life. On the contrary, strongly Unionist councils make some Nationalist appointments and strongly Nationalist councils select many Unionists for paid offices. The records are conclusive, moreover, in showing that in districts where the sentiment is overwhelmingly Nationalist the minority gets far larger representation than does the Nationalist minority in districts overwhelmingly Unionist. It will be understood that political divisions virtually parallel religious divisions. Hence the terms Nationalist and Unionist are about synonymous with Catholic and Protestant, although there are many Protestant Nationalists and Catholic Unionists. This explanation is made in order that the reader may observe that under Home Rule, in local affairs, both political and religious differences are being submerged in the desire for good and equitable administration.

Taking a few counties at random, we find that Armagh, where fifty-six per cent. of the people are Unionists, the county council consists of eight Nationalists and twenty-two Unionists, but only three of the fifty salaried officers employed are Nationalists. With a little more than half of the population, the Unionists take ninety-four per cent. of the appointments. Antrim, having a population of eighty per cent. Unionist, elects twenty-six Unionists among the twenty-nine councilors, and the council appoints sixty Unionists and five Nationalists to salaried offices. With eighty per cent. of the popular vote the Unionists claim ninety-two per cent. of the jobs. Tyrone's population is 55 per cent. Nationalist, yet the council consists of sixteen Unionists to thirteen Nationalists. In the matter of appointments the Unionist majority makes full use of its power, naming no fewer than forty-seven out of the fifty-two officers.

On the other hand, Cork, which is ninety per cent. Nationalist, elects a council composed exclusively of Na-

tionalists, yet forty of the one hundred and ninety-one appointments—more than twenty per cent.—are given to Unionists. Cavan likewise elects a wholly Nationalist council, yet twenty-six of fifty-six appointments—forty-six per cent.—of the salaried offices go to Unionists.

As the opposition to local Home Rule has come wholly from Unionists, and wholly on the ground that it invites oppression of Unionist citizens, these figures are illuminating. They show unmistakably that Nationalist districts treat the minority much more fairly and generously than Unionist districts. Those who have thought that the democratic system would lead to discrimination against Unionists are invited to study the accompanying table. The first column gives the percentage of the dominant party in the population, the second column gives the political division of the county council and the third column the salaried officers appointed, with their politics:

County.	Population. Per cent.	Council.		Appointments.	
		Nat.	Un.	Nat.	Un.
Armagh .....	56 Un.	8	22	3	47
Galway .....	94 Nat.	32	1	50	11
Tyrone .....	55 Nat.	13	16	5	47
Cork .....	90 Nat.	All	Nat.	151	40
Fermanagh .....	55 Nat.	10	17	17	58
Cavan .....	81 Nat.	All	Nat.	30	26
West Meath.....	92 Nat.	26	5	37	17
Kings .....	89 Nat.	27	1	21	19
Limerick .....	95 Nat.	26	2	39	6
Antrim .....	80 Un.	26	3	5	60
Monaghan .....	73 Nat.	25	2	34	23
Louth .....	90 Nat.	31	2	36	17
Kildare .....	86 Nat.	23	3	31	9
Clare .....	98 Nat.	All	Nat.	62	6
Roscommon .....	98 Nat.	29	1	48	8
Sligo .....	90 Nat.	All	Nat.	58	14
Mayo .....	97 Nat.	All	Nat.	69	8
Queens .....	88 Nat.	All	Nat.	25	11
Tipperary, North.....	93 Nat.	All	Nat.	19	8
Tipperary, South.....	94 Nat.	31	1	24	9
Leitrim .....	90 Nat.	26	0	22	10
Carlow .....	88 Nat.	23	2	27	18
Kerry .....	97 Nat.	All	Nat.	93	19
Meath .....	92 Nat.	29	2	38	14

Summarized, these figures show that in the two Unionist counties the Unionists average sixty-eight per cent. of the population and hold ninety-three per cent. of the appoint-

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ments; while in the Nationalist counties the Nationalists average eighty-seven and one-half per cent. of the population and hold seventy per cent. of the appointments. If Home Rule means discrimination, where does it appear?

As I close these letters two curious pictures come to me. On a bright June day in 1900 I stood on the railroad platform at Pretoria, chatting with a stout, bearded man who leaned over the rear platform of a train. He was in military uniform, and the train was loaded with armed troops which he commanded, infantry and artillery. Over the stony hills to the southward came the irregular thud of field guns, for the attacking army was closing in on the Boer capital. Presently the train pulled out, the man on the rear platform waving a courteous good-bye.

It was General Louis Botha, commander of the Boer troops fighting the British forces, on his way to the front, to maintain for two years an unequal struggle against the Imperial armies.

The other picture is seven years later—May, 1907. Outside the Guildhall, in London, the streets are packed with dense crowds, the buildings gay with many flags. Through the lanes of people rolls a carriage, preceded by a clattering squadron of mounted guards and followed by a mighty wave of cheers. From the carriage steps a stoutly built man in frock suit and silk hat. Bowing gravely to the plaudits of the crowd, he passes into the Guildhall, to be honored by the greatest men of England and her colonies.

It is the Right Honorable General Louis Botha, Prime Minister of the Transvaal, political ruler of a self-governing unit of the Empire.

Home Rule in the Transvaal, a free Parliament in Pretoria, the enemy's commander as Prime Minister, within five years of the ending of the war. England can be just and generous to the Boer. Does Ireland deserve less? Will the interests of the Empire be conserved with less?

## \*POSTSCRIPT

### THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION

Here's for a friendly shirt-sleeve talk with those active correspondents who have been so frankly critical of my writings on the Irish question. In the lull before the last two letters on the subject—only two more!—come clattering down on their unwilling heads, let us see where we stand. A personal discussion of this character has no sort of place in the general treatment of the subject, but it will serve to clear up some obscurities that are unavoidable in the haste of newspaper writing. First let me repeat the happy announcement that two more letters will complete the series. I am aware of several correspondents, most of them anonymous, who will be glad it's no worse. I can assure them they're not any more gratified than I am. For one whose time is pretty well occupied, the study and discussion of a matter as big as the Irish question is no idle amusement.

More than one person, in a desire to express dissent, wrote that the letters made them "tired." I haven't the slightest doubt of it. They made me tired, too, and I never wrote anything with more genuine relief than I wrote the last word of the last sentence of the last letter. If I felt somewhat exhausted, in spite of firm conviction that everything I wrote was true and fair, it is not astonishing that readers who differ should feel exhausted, too. Incidentally, let me urge them to read those two letters, even at the risk of further prostration. I've read their communications—the most severe ones with the greatest entertainment—and it's only fair that they should read mine. They're not bad letters, really.

To begin at the beginning, the most frequent criticism

\*This statement was published just before the closing of the series of letters, in response to criticisms, the nature of which is indicated.

of my articles is upon religious grounds. As a matter of fact, that is not only the beginning, but the end and the middle as well. With one or two exceptions, from persons who wrote intelligently as well as with conviction, the letters condemned what I had written as being part of a religious controversy or propaganda. In a single breath, or rather with a single dip in the inkstand, these correspondents denounced me for dragging religion into the discussion and then proved I was a literary outcast because I did not make their religious views the paramount factor. One indignant person—I recall that his letter made a radiant break in a rather dull day—dismissed my labors with the charge that I was a “narrow-minded bigot,” hopelessly enslaved by the Church to which he assigned me. Perhaps this will be sufficient apology for the very personal disclosure that back of my Americanism is an ancestry of double-dyed Ulster Scotch-Irish and that the nearest approach to a saint in my church is John Wesley. [Upon my word, I don’t see that this fact is of surpassing interest, now that I have written it. But if my views on Home Rule are to be repudiated on account of my theological convictions, let’s get the record straight.]

So we come now to the important objection of my critical friends. Why was religion introduced in the discussion at all? Setting aside the fact that nine out of ten of the opponents of Home Rule—those who have written about my articles, at least—oppose it on religious grounds, how can it be said that I introduced it? They might as well accuse me of inventing landlordism or of discovering Dublin Castle. One may deprecate the prominence of religion in the strife that has afflicted Ireland, but one cannot in fairness ignore it. It is a fact, and the discussion of Irish affairs which evades it is futile and dishonest. Religious differences made much of Irish history and were the direct and openly avowed inspiration of some of the most important legislation affecting the country. Religious discrimination is one of the evils charged against the present system of government; religion constitutes one of the great divisions of the people, and a conflict of religious convictions is at the bottom of the opposition to Home Rule. If religion was “dragged into” the Irish question, the dragging was done by Elizabeth, James I, William

III, James II and their Parliaments, but there's no use writing peevish letters to them, because they're dead. And if it is kept in, the keeping is done by those who denounce the idea of self-government upon the ground that it would confer equal rights upon citizens of a different faith. It enters into the question in no other way. If the demand for Home Rule stood upon nothing more than religious grounds, it would never have had the devotion of a Gladstone or a Bright, or the indorsement of the British House of Commons, which it has at this very moment. Incidentally, it would not have interested The North American, and that would have saved me a lot of work and several readers irritation.

But here comes a more friendly critic—about fifteen per cent. Home Ruler, this chap. You're right (he says) to a certain extent. As an economic proposition, Ireland should have self-government. But why go back into history that ought to be forgotten (says he) and rake up old feuds and old animosities? If Ireland wins, it will be because the present system is wasteful, unjust and generally impossible and not because of alleged atrocities by James I or Cromwell.

There's something in that, too. But not very much. Frankly, I took no particular pleasure in wandering around in the Middle Ages; but as luck would have it, that was when the "Irish Question" was made. A man who started to trace the development of the protective tariff and ignored everything back of, say, 1885, might produce a pleasing tract, but it would not be excessively valuable. So, if we want to know why all these problems have arisen in Ireland and why England must needs spend so much time in remedial legislation, we've got to go back to the days when the problems were fashioned. I "raked up" the Plantagenets and the Tudors and the Roundheads and all the rest of them because they were the persons who laid the foundations of the Irish Question of this year of grace 1909. And with all due respect to my critical friends, it is perfectly obvious that no one can judge that question fairly unless he does a little "raking" to begin with.

As to old "animosities"—bless your hearts, it was animosities that folks lived on (and died from) in those iron

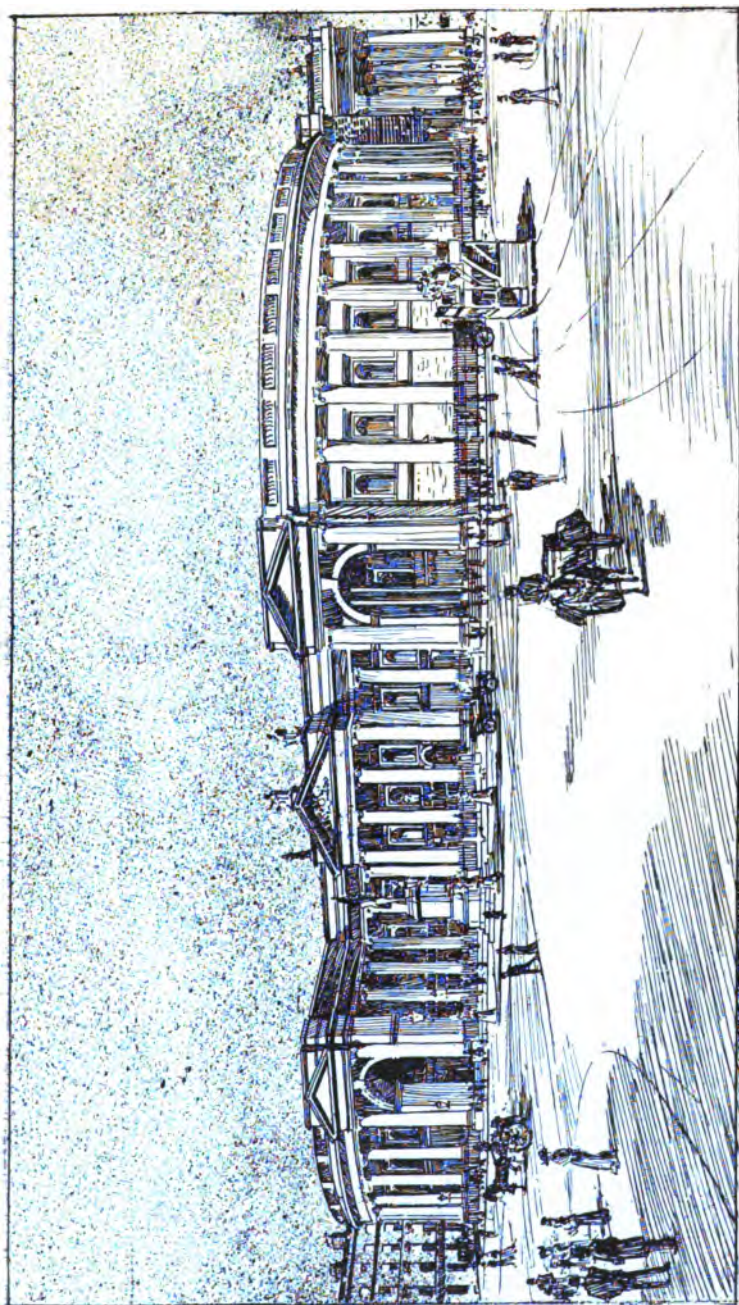


days. Once you take up the historical prologue—and you've got to do it to be fair with yourself in studying the matter—you can no more dodge the prevailing animosities than you can dodge raindrops. Personally, I never tried to dodge them. They interest me, just as do any other facts which have a bearing upon the subject I am endeavoring to treat.

For it must not be supposed that these "animosities" were the mere temporary results of racial and religious strife; if they were, God forbid that any one should rake them up. But the present problem, says our friend, is purely an economic proposition. That's a good, safe word, isn't it—economic? Very well, I am for it; with the added remark that the very "animosities" of old, which all of us regret and deplore, constitute one of the strongest factors in the economic situation of today. Landlordism, the "congested districts," the folly and injustice of Dublin Castle government—whence came these flowers of misrule? The seeds were planted in the stirring up of those very "animosities" which we are on account to mention, but which, it seems, are to be accepted as the products of some sort of miraculous growth, without beginning and with very little chance of ending.

There are those, I know, who cannot read the records of three or four hundred years ago without wanting to go out and lick the opposition. I envy them their activity of mind and passionate adherence to conviction, and if I have offended any such, let this be my assurance that I had no such intention. For there were two reasons for the brief record which I made of past events. One was, as explained, to elucidate in some measure the questions of to-day to which they gave rise; the other was to contrast the present with the past—to bring into relief the bright prospect of a nation united, peaceful and prosperous against that dark background of greed and intolerance.

But even granting that I was animated by no ulterior—or shall we say Ulterior?—motives, there are those who complain that the historical references were unfair, tending to accuse one side and excuse the other. Glancing over them, I am not moved to confess any such coloring of the record, despite obvious defects due to haste and the limitations of



BANK OF IRELAND, DUBLIN, WHERE IRISH PARLIAMENT MET, 1782-1800.



space, for I observe that virtually every quotation I used was from an authority associated with the side which protests. Froude, Gladstone, Green, Lecky, Goldwin Smith—none of these, surely, can be accused of narrow-minded hostility to the English element in Ireland. Nor would any sane man attempt to maintain that one side monopolized the crime and violence, while the other side monopolized all the virtues. The story of those dark days, in truth, is a story of blood and oppression, of ruthless attack and savage reprisal, and the scars were deep on both sides; but the fact remains that the general, permanent effect, which alone justifies the historical discussion, was to lay upon the great mass of the Irish people a burden of poverty and misrule from which they are to-day entitled to relief.

And here's another type of critic. He is familiar with the course of events, and inclined, apparently, to be friendly to the Home Rule cause, but he asks rather warmly why England's treatment of Ireland to-day should be condemned as mercilessly as that of past centuries. "Why," he says, "do you ignore all the costly reforms of the last generation? What other country has ever undertaken such revolutionary works of progress as England has undertaken in Ireland? Your purpose seems to be not to remark and aid that progress, but to stir up fresh hatred of England."

This rather saddens me. It really does. Because it is a condemnation of the one quality which I aimed to achieve in my articles—clearness. I went to Ireland this summer, after a lapse of seven years, expressly to record the remarkable improvements wrought through legislation, and I was under the pleasing impression that I had described and discussed those improvements, and applauded that legislation, to the extent of an almost scandalous number of columns. While the fact is of no public interest, since my fairness in this regard is questioned, I may say that I have a rather strong predilection for England; that I have more friends in England than in Ireland, and that I consider England, through her abler statesmen, has worked manfully during recent years to undo the wrongs of centuries. Yet continued condemnation of the system of government is perfectly justified. If for no other reason, let it be because no reform

worth while was ever won without agitation. This involves criticism from which a tinge of bitterness is inseparable, but when it descends to unreasoning hatred, it may well be ignored, because it is ineffective. We don't forget, by the way—and we urge the excited opponents of Home Rule not to forget—that public opinion in England, as reflected in the House of Commons, is strongly for rendering political justice to Ireland.

To keep these remarks from extending to the length of the original articles, let us mention only one more critic. He objects to our referring to the "Irish" demand for Home Rule, because, he says, it is merely a factional demand. "Why don't you give Ulster's side of the dispute?" he asks. "Isn't Ulster entitled to a show?" Ulster's side, Unionism, is easily given. It is opposition to Home Rule. It is the negation of all that is represented in the movement for self-government. As for giving Ulster a "show," no fair-minded man would urge less. It is justly entitled to twenty-five per cent. of representation in the government; it has controlled one hundred per cent. too long.

I take leave of the subject now with the hope that all of us have learned something by the discussion. I have, anyway, and the hardest jolts from my critics have been accepted cheerfully. Upon the main question we do not agree, but I am as certain as I can be of anything that the future will bring us nearer together. For Home Rule is coming; the public opinion of Ireland, of England, of the British colonies, of the United States, is for it, and will prevail. And when Home Rule does come, and has spread peace and brotherhood and justice where strife has too long ruled, its opponents will no more condemn the new order than they condemn the other reforms which they fought and then embraced.

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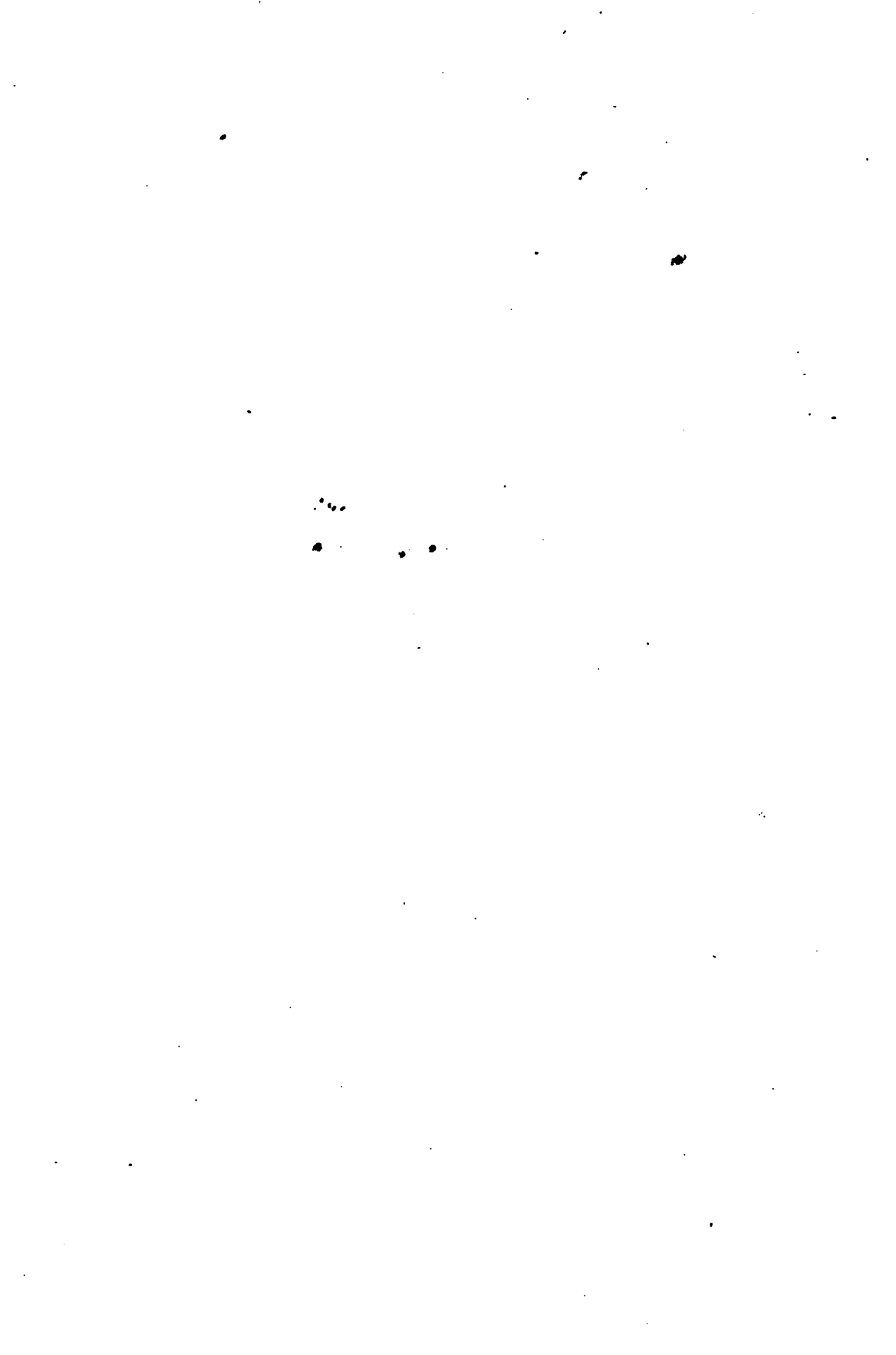
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